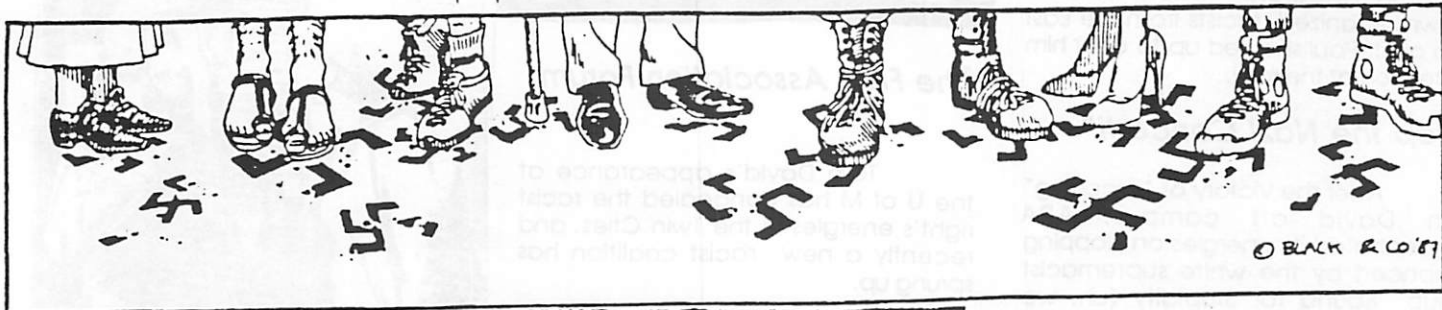


# ***Anti-Racist Action:*** **a reader**

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# Anti-Racist Action



## History of Anti-racist Action: The Baldies, 1987

Anti-Racist Action began in 1987 with a group of multi-racial, youth oriented, skinhead and non-skinhead men. The Baldies. A.R.A. emerged as a response to the White Knights, a new grouping of neo-nazi skinheads who were organizing for white supremacy in Minneapolis (they were influenced by racist leader Tom Metzger's White Aryan Resistance in California). The Baldies wanted a more broad-based resistance to the nazis, and created A.R.A. Some members came from different gangs; the Vice-Lords, Latin Kings, the Disciples, some didn't, but the unifying element was their working-class commitment to defeating racist organizing in the twin cities as well as nation-wide. Anti-Racist Action had tremendous success in combatting and defeating the White Knights organizing capabilities through education and direct confrontation. This victory gave impetus for many A.R.A. chapters to autonomously emerge in San Francisco, Chicago, Cincinnati, Milwaukee, Indianapolis, and Portland. A.R.A. received nation wide notoriety with articles in City Pages, The Minneapolis Star and Tribune, Chicago Tribune, and the nationally distributed magazine, The Utne Reader. It was probably one of the most important grassroots militant youth movements against racism and fascism in recent history, precisely because their membership was multi-cultural, working class-based, and had gang participation. Their strength and courage put out a message in their communities that there was no room for nazis in the scene.

After the defeat of the White Knights ARA dissipated for several reasons - there were no easy targets to organize against and the group turned towards more internal education.

## Reformation of ARA, 1991

In the Spring of 1990, members of the Baldies and of the Revolutionary



Anarchist Bowling League drafted up a flyer with the hope of regrouping Anti-racist Action. A wonderfully diverse group of people came together and started articulating the kind of anti racist group they would like to be in. We began with a strong analysis of how heterosexually male-dominated and controlled the old ARA was. The new group also agreed that physical confrontation can be used as a tactic against racist presence, but that we needed to build an understanding of how men often use violence to dominate and control.



## March on The East Side

In response to several racist attacks, and constant organizing by the white supremacist Northern Hammerskinheads on the East Side of St. Paul, ARA's first public event was to begin organizing a march in this community. In June of 1991. With the help of our East Side members, we began door knocking, distributing and posting fliers, talking with neighbors, meeting with several different community councils, as well as participating in several discussions with other concerned activists about tactics and strategy. The march brought about 300 righteous anti-racists together from Minneapolis and St. Paul to speak out against racist attacks and also give support to the anti-racist presence in the East Side. Many saw the importance of the march in raising awareness of the issue of racism, but still others saw the march as "putting down the East side" because we pointed out the racist elements organizing there. The march was a very important learning event, and we apply what we have learned towards other events we participate in.

## University ARA and the White Student Union

In August of 1991, Tom David began running an ad in The Daily (the University of Minnesota campus newspaper) for the formation of a White Student Union. Several enraged letters and articles later, ARA put out a call to all student groups to come together and form a united force against this organized racism and to take action. The Coalition Against White Supremacy (CAWS) was formed. CAWS organized a rally, 500 people strong, where the diverseness of the CAWS membership was reflected in its speakers. Tom David and his cronies were escorted off campus by the mobilized protestors who chanted, "On the campus, on the



streets, nazi scum taste defeat!"

Tom David's connections with Neo-Nazi groups on the east side became apparent when six well-known organized racists from the East Side of St. Paul showed up to offer him protection at the rally.

### "Stop the Nazi Concert!"

After the victory of "escorting" Tom David off campus, ARA concentrated its energies on stopping a concert by the white supremacist group Bound for Stupidity (uh, we mean Glory!) and issued a leaflet calling for the community (predominantly Vietnamese) to phone in to try and stop the concert. After a few short days, the armory which was going to sponsor the event caved in to community and media pressure and refused to hold the event. Yay!!

### "Three Pronged Attack": The Regrouping

After the major successes on the march on the East Side, the raising of awareness and the resistance to the White Student Union, as well as the stopping of the Nazi concert, ARA realized that it would be much more effective to split up into three separate subgroups: University ARA, South Minneapolis ARA, and St. Paul ARA (situated on the East Side). Each group is semi-autonomous and completes projects of its own, yet also gets the guidance of the larger three group ARA for major decisions and education. We feel that this sort of organization offers the best community involvement (as the people from each community become part of the respective ARA sub-group), as well as being much more efficient and organized. Hasta La Victoria Siempre!



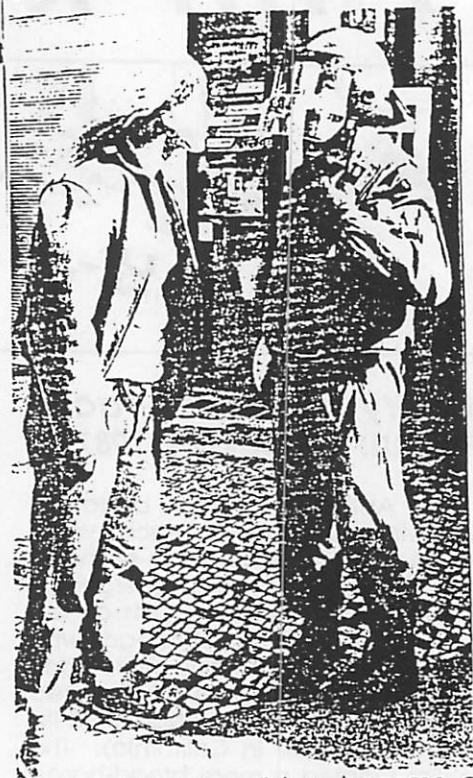
### The Free Association Forum

Tom David's appearance at the U of M has congealed the racist right's energies in the Twin Cities, and recently a new racist coalition has sprung up.

Recently racist groups have been organizing and racist attacks and other hate crimes have been increasing in the Twin Cities (as well as nationwide). This is in part due to the Free Association Forum. The FAF is a local coalition of national hate groups such as the Ku Klux Klan, the Posse Comitatus, White Aryan Resistance, Northern Hammer Skinheads, as well as the White Student Union. The KKK has opened local chapters in St. Paul and Stillwater, while recruitment flyers have been distributed in North Minneapolis, St. Paul and surrounding areas. Klan literature is being distributed within the Minneapolis Public School system and the racist White Student Union is in the process of becoming a student group at the U of M. These racists perpetuate mental and physical brutality on people of color, women, gays, lesbians, and bisexuals, people of different religious belief (especially Jews and Muslims), and anyone who disagrees and works against their racist ideology. Be

aware that these groups are dangerous, they are growing, and must be resisted from every strand of society. Only through collective resistance can we create an equal and racist-free world.

### University ARA: As We See It



"Diversity" has become a catch-phrase of the times, a liberals' cliché for an underfunded, inefficient and still largely Eurocentric educational system.

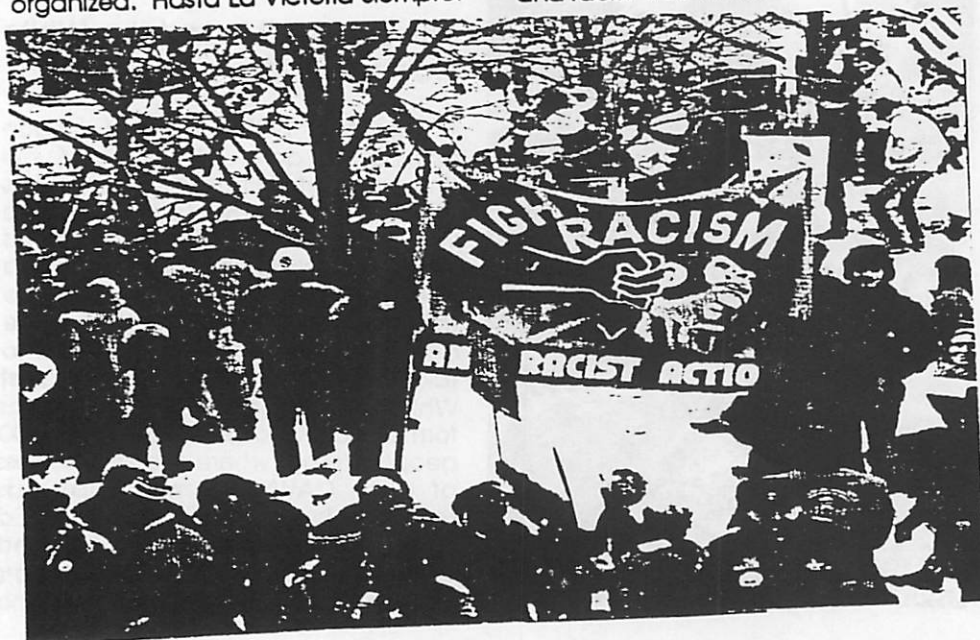
Existing and even future legislated reforms are not enough because legislating from the position of power ignores the need to analyze and overturn the whole power structure in this country.

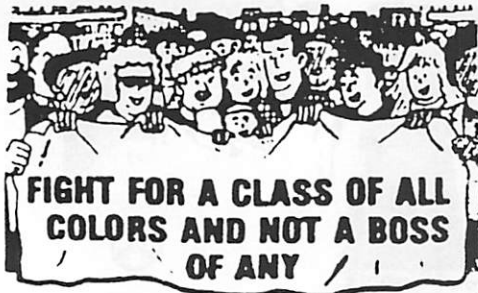
It takes people who have been denied power to educate each other to overcome the Eurocentric worldviews pushed on them. To inspire a movement towards mutual respect for other colors and other cultures and to recognize and tolerate real Diversity (not the token reforms Government and Academia swallow grudgingly), those who have been oppressed must claim freedom and civil rights for themselves.

White people who truly want to work for the end of Racism, but have the potential to become oppressors through the positions society puts them in, should not fall into useless guilt or despair, which is itself a luxury. No one is born a racist or is racist because of their own skin color: It is the conditions we are born into that make us racist if we accept them without question or meet them with apathy.

### Grassroots Vs. Government

University Anti-Racist Action works as a political group from these premises: that racism is ingrained into our system



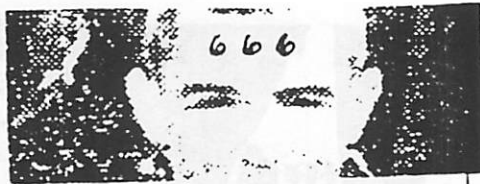


of governing, which perpetuates a hierarchy that oppresses everyone through manipulation and false divisions/dichotomies. Action must be taken not only through the approved or legal channels, which perpetuate this system by providing for resistance by governmentally approved means but by organizing ourselves with a non-hierarchical structure. U ARA believes we must take action directly against the oppressive system, particularly racist hate groups, because the mainstream prefers to ignore rather than challenge their beliefs. This means that we *must* not rely on the government or corporate institutions to defeat racism, rather *we* must organize as a mass of people of different cultures and educate each other and reclaim the power we have to forge a free and equal society that is controlled from the grassroots. Certainly, governmental policies such as affirmative action and Roe V. Wade help push notions of equality onto grudgingly accepting economic and political institutions, but as noticed from the recent assault on these same policies shows, The government giveth and the government taketh away!

### ***Tactics: Demonstrations and Fighting Back***

We as everyday citizens are so removed from those in power who make the laws, that often times the only way to focus attention on the raging problems of racism are to make a strong, lively, visual presence. Demonstrating and rallies are essential parts of resistance. In a society that completely controls us, from standing in line and raising our hand to go to the bathroom when we are children, to punching in and out every day at a job that we hate but are told that it is our only legal option, so "get used to it", creating a space all our own such as a march or rally is an incredibly liberating prospect.

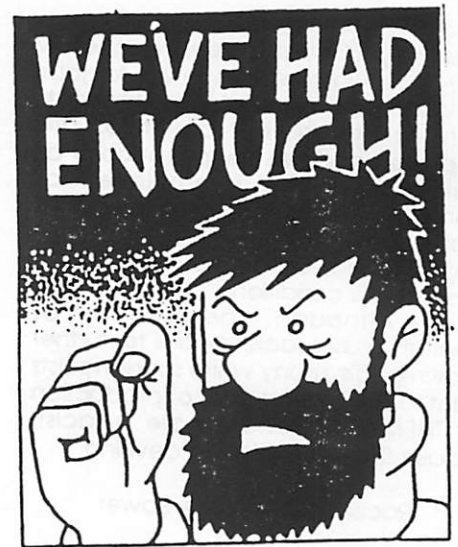
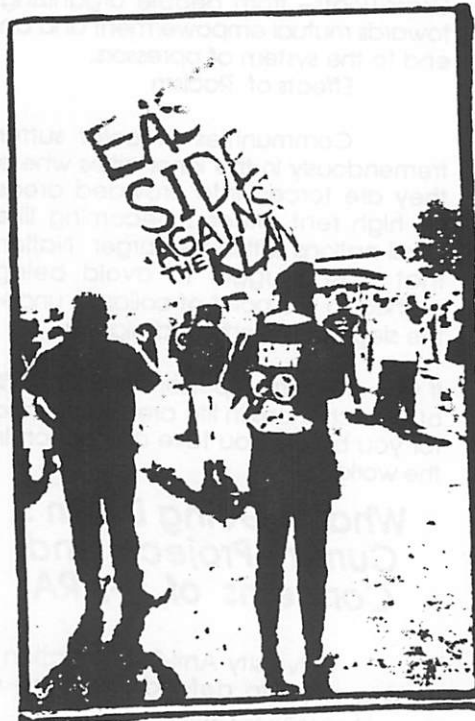
Demonstrations are just one tactic in a strategy which includes letter writing, speaking at events, putting on musical programs, organizing community events, as well as defending potential victims of racist, sexist, or heterosexist violence. Part of this entails direct confrontation with the



perpetrators, although this should not be elevated to the main thrust of a strategy: We understand that lasting change comes from people banding together, not from isolated acts of individuals fighting back. On the other hand, it is important to realize the necessity of this tactic. Fighting back in a world which conveniently keeps the oppressed in their victim role, can lead to new understandings of the nature of oppression and the ability to sustain their resistance.

### ***University ARA: History***

University ARA is committed to using a variety of tactics in the struggle against oppression. In the short while of our existence as a campus-based group we were instrumental in organizing a large meeting of campus groups and individual students as a response to racist opinion piece articles in Sept. 1991. ARA then initiated a call for unified coalition of student groups against racism and proposed the name The Coalition Against White Supremacy (The CAWS). From this coalition a demonstration and rally was planned, at which over 500 lively students participated. We have participated in forums on racism (albeit in different ways than the panel thought), and have issued many leaflets and opinion pieces and letters to the editor exposing Tom David and his Neo-Nazi connections.



### ***University ARA: Structure***

Our group attempts to be non-hierarchical and democratic, and we try to work together to find ways to help each other overcome our oppressive baggage that we bring in with us. Because not everyone has been encouraged to develop leadership skills or has access to the same resources to learn (i.e. the computer), U ARA attempts at sharing these skills. "Everyone is a leader, and no one a follower" is a motto we strive to attain. If you see things as we do, or are interested in finding out more, check us out!

### ***What is Racism?***

Racism is a social and economic oppression created and perpetuated by those in power, a majority of whom identify themselves with one color to the detriment of all others.

For example:

Our capitalist system relies on the condition of a large pool of

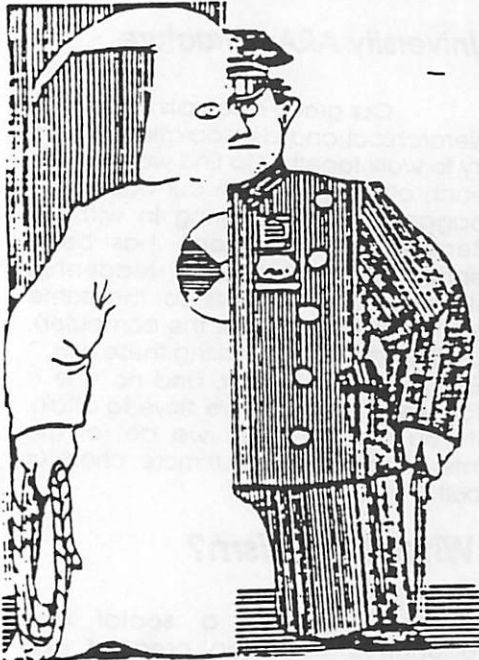




unemployed labor to keep wages low and keep workers competing for jobs with low wages. White supremacists want to ensure that all whites are employed and use people of color as that pool of the unemployed or mentally-employed to use as a scapegoat and a prod on white workers to accept their condition.

Although the system of Capitalism uses racist means to further its own goals, many white supremacists want to seize the means of production for THEMSELVES and create a fascist, racist State of their own devising.

Racism=Prejudice + Power



Anyone can be prejudiced, but that only becomes Racism when implemented by a group in power over other groups.

In America, the prejudices of non-whites are not Racism by this definition because they don't have the power to control the resources and means of production of society, and by extension, then, cannot withhold those important resources (jobs, food, housing, leisure and cultural expression, education, clothing, etc.). They are not implemented in a systematic way (within the system itself) towards the destruction and assimilation of other cultures. This is what distinguishes white supremacist groups and the United States government's racism, and the various prejudices of people of color. Many of these prejudices are understandable as ways of retaining a cultural identity and keeping a sense of personhood in a social climate which often tries to undermine the worth and humanity of people of color.



Duke as Grand Wizard

### Organized White Supremacy

Racist organizations prey upon a white person's fear of unemployment. In financially depressed times, and attempts to incite fear in people of color by violent speech and terrorist actions against them, undermining their possibilities for resistance.

White Supremacists attack Affirmative Action policies, distort them, and make them seem threatening to white workers. They ignore that these policies are not the problem, but an attempt at a remedy by compensating for the bigotry which is part of the large-scale economic problem of Unemployment.

Unfortunately as a remedy, it applies band-aids to a huge and infected wound. Racism pervades the very structure of our Government, Economy and "Justice" System. Despite our taking this view, we are not against Affirmative Action: though inadequate to the scope of the problem, it counteracts the bigotry that could keep people of color from jobs they need to survive.

The Government cannot legislate away racism. Tolerance comes from people educating each other. True Change will come from the Grass-Roots— from people organizing towards mutual empowerment and an end to the system of oppressors.

### Effects of Racism

Communities of color suffer tremendously in the inner cities where they are forced into crowded areas by high rent prices, becoming like small nations within the larger Nation that must struggle to avoid being pushed to the point of collapse under the siege of poverty and bigotry.

If you are born a person of color, 17% of your chances in life are determined for you before you take any action in the world.

### What's Going Down : Current Projects and Concerns of U-ARA

University Anti-Racist Action is taking steps to defend the rights of

various oppressed peoples in American society. By searching for the causes of, for example, racism, sexism, and homophobia, and acting on these causes, we hope to affect substantial social and political change. Successful activities such as Rock Against Racism and on-campus demonstrations against racism organizing at the university are examples of some of the work our group has done. Seeking to be proactive rather than reacting to the melodrama of the right-wing, we plan events that increase awareness of racism, homophobia, and sexism and their related social and economic causes.

On February 8, 1992, University Anti-Racist Action put together a benefit, Rock Against Racism, that combined an eclectic blend of local musical talent with speakers of diverse backgrounds raising their voices to Rock Against Racism.

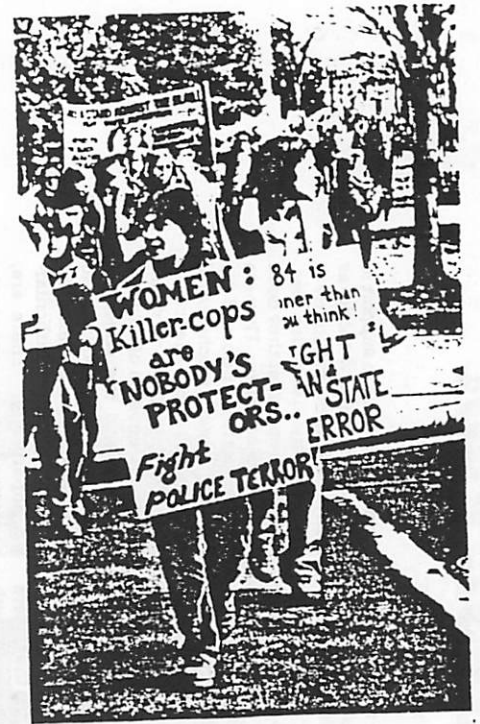
The members of ARA come from a variety of political backgrounds; discussion is emphasized and encouraged at our meetings. If you feel you can contribute to our effort, please attend one of our weekly meetings held Wednesday afternoon in Coffman Union -- check the schedule posted daily in Coffman for the room and the time.





supremacists claim to have a strong fundamentalist religious background, with which they justify their ideologies, especially concerning the nuclear family and sexuality. Non-heterosexual relationships run counter to the accepted gender roles stereotypes in our society. These relationships are therefore considered dangerous, deviant, and deserving of punishment or violence. Queer wimmin break from the way wimmin are supposed to act. They challenge the assumption that men have constant access to wimmin. Society reacts with terrorization and violence against people seen as different. Queer men are not seen as real men. In actuality they are challenging and expanding on the limited gender roles taught to them.

The perpetuation of the Aryan race is of central importance to the sexist, homophobic, white supremacist ideology. A fundamental tenet is men's control of wimmin's



## Interconnections of All Oppressions

It is necessary for anti-racists to have an understanding of the hierarchical nature of our society. As people working to eliminate racism and anti-Jewish prejudice, it is essential to fight sexism, homophobia, heterosexism, ableism, ageism, religious dogmatism, and classism. These oppressions all have common roots, based on a theory of white, ruling class, heterosexual dominance. Because of the meshed nature of oppressions, to interrupt and completely dismantle one oppression, we must also destroy the others. How can a lesbian of African descent claim her freedom when the anti-racist war is being fought by a group that leaves no space for her to be all of who she is? When we come together as anti-racists, the oppressor/ oppressed identities we have been taught are often played out in group dynamics. There must be a collective responsibility within the group to not only smash systematic institutional oppression but to also acknowledge how interpersonal hierarchies get played out in the group.

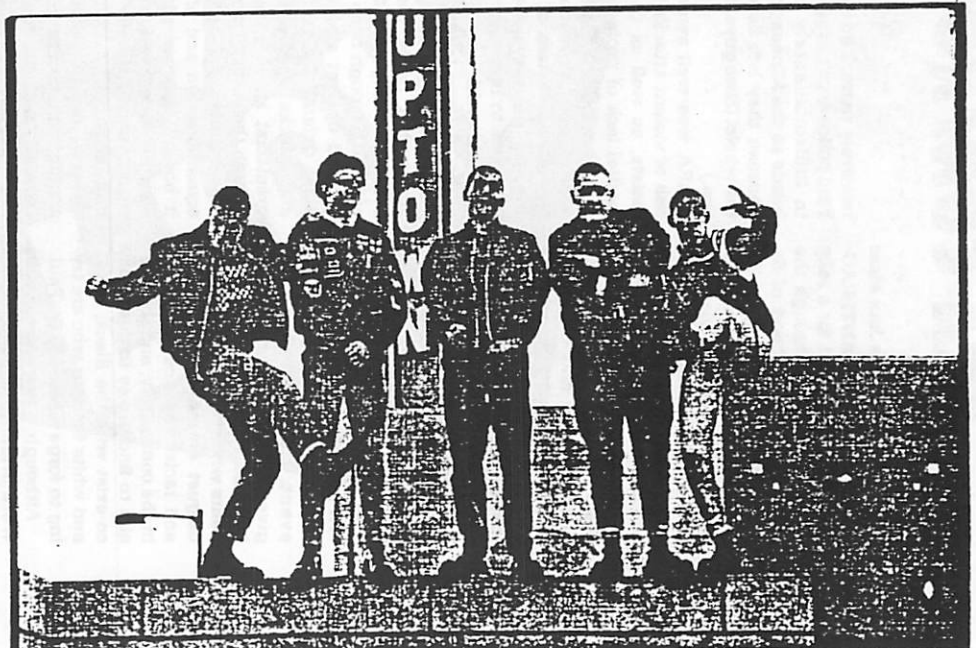
The connection between neo-nazi terrorization of people of color, wimmin, and queers are clear. It is important to see these acts as parallel so that the anti-racist movement can understand the dangers, the nature of oppression, and the goals of nazi groups.

White supremacists practice the extremes of bigotry, and by doing so make clearer the commonalities of these oppressions. Most white



reproduction: white wimmin are used to produce white babies, and wimmin of color are forcibly sterilized. The maintenance of traditional Eurocentric family values and sex roles are utilized to achieve these goals, as well as to perpetuate a gender and sex-role stereotypes.

The nature of oppression divides us and keeps us at each others' throats, rather than bringing down the straight, white, male, ruling-class system. The more we acknowledge this, the more unified and strong our movement for real equality and freedom becomes.





# ARA CONFRONTS RACISM IN EAST ST. PAUL

BY JEAN MARC

**O**VER 300 ANTI-RACISTS gathered for a rally and march through the East Side neighborhood of St. Paul, Minnesota on June 22. Organized by Anti-Racist Action (ARA), a democratic coalition of anarchists, anti-racist skinheads, lesbians, bisexuals and gay men, the march proved to be a huge empowering success. Prompted by the rise in racist attacks and organized white supremacist violence such as the White Aryan Movement, the East Side Anti-Racist Christian Identity preachers, Anti-Racist Action refused to allow this dangerous organizing to continue unchecked and uncontested.

After some great music and a few inspiring speeches by folks who had helped organize the event, the microphone was given up to residents of the East Side who attended. Residents who spoke talked of their disgust at the hatred, racism and racist violence happening in the community, and their desire to find a way to peacefully co-exist with the Black, Asian and white families who are trying to forge a home in St. Paul.

Although a few racist goons were walking around causing the event to get on edge at its strength and visibility, and about six carloads of white supremacists were watching from side streets, the decentralized leadership structure decided to proceed with the march through the racists' "stomping" grounds. Almost immediately the march spilled into the street, all the while chanting "The East Side's for everyone, put the Nazi's on the street," and "No Nazi's, No KKK, No Racist USA!" When we came to the major business intersection, it seemed almost second nature to just take the four-lane street — the energy of this crowd would not be abated! Even though the cops were sweating at having no idea what we were going to do next, they were

relatively tame. I guess the St. Paul police aren't as well-versed in indiscriminately cracking heads as the Minneapolis cops, because they left us alone on the whole. (Nice guys, those police.)

ARA was well aware of the risk of violent attacks from the racists, as well as the fundamental lack of protection from the police. We had a few contingents and refreshingly decentralized system of internal security was developed. Our plan was to recruit a local contingent with anti-Nazi who might be up (and I mean from Mr. Tom Metzger himself) to show that many California bonobos might present our way (it). Though none actually showed up, yet also unflexibly defended the march from any attacks by the white supremacist knuckheads. Although the security system was somewhat decentralized, communication and efficiency, it nonetheless worked quite well, as shown when several Neo-Nazi bonobos heads from W.A.R. Youth showed up to provoke the march with taunts of "White Power," "race traitors" (yay!), and goose-stepping to "Self Hail." They looked pathetically insignificant when twenty-five of the security team went to within the back ready to protect the march from any attacks. They graciously refused.

On the whole the racist was ignored and we continued the march winding through the predominantly Black section of the East Side. Families came out of their houses to see in many cases ethnic chants of "Hey Ho Ho, Racism (or Racism, even depending on your politics) Has Got To GO!" As I glanced towards the front of the march, I noticed a young African-American girl's face light up and she began to chant, while proudly carrying a placard that announced "Queers

Back." I realized who the march was for — not the white reactionaries in the community (although a large aspect of the march campaign was focused on conveying ARA's intent for the march to the white community, as well as articulating a broad-based anti-racist message and plan to resist, but rather to send support and solidarity with the people directly affected by racist violence. The empowerment of feeling a sense of solidarity with the Black, Chinese/a, and Asian communities was overwhelming.

This rally and march was three months in the planning and utilized quite different tactics and strategy than what is usually employed by anarchists, socialists, and radical peace and justice activists in the Twin Cities. We actually allowed for an extensive propaganda blitz with leaflets, posters, a news flash, the cities-wide "alternative newspaper" as well as leafleting and distributing informational pamphlets at the premiere of the documentary on the racist revolutionary right, *Blood in the Face*. This event, in particular, proved to be an excellent forum for conveying ARA's politics and plans for a march, as after seeing such a scary and painfully real film many people talked of being unsure of how to combat this rising menace.

The campaign on the East Side was the most innovative however. A fairly thorough educational pamphlet was put together and distributed door-to-door on parts of the march route, which allowed for face to face discussion, as well as the opportunity to gauge support. It turned out, Black youth directly affected by the violence, supported the march, as did some white anti-racist citizens. An extensive anti-racist spray-painting campaign was also begun in the East Side (although

it received some slack for being callous and disrespectful to the community — an important criticism to look at). ARA also has been engaged in an all-out surveillance of the membership and leaders of the racist movement within the Twin Cities and has amassed a massive amount of information. We also attended two separate district Community Councils in the East Side to inform them of the march and pump up support. We were met coolly at the first, but at the second they were tremendously impressed with the work put into the march, as well as the professionalism of the anti-racist information packet, and we were lent their support and encouraged to participate in our struggle.

The following day's articles in the local mainstream press were, despite some biases (of course) reporting, nonetheless fairly thorough. Over two luke-warm front page Sunday articles in the mainstream press, the piece de resistance was an Op-Ed article the following Wednesday which avowed the need for "unified action" and celebrated ARA's role in bringing the racist violence and organizing to the surface. Effective organizing can bring about positive change, as long as it's creative and successful in its commitment. ARA now is committed to following through with organizing on the East Side, and we have been offered offices to hold meetings in. We have also been given the free production services of two people who work at the local cable access channel so that we can air an anti-racist cable show that might help to combat Race and Reason's racist messages.

The ways of attacking racism and organizing the support necessary for the dismantling of racism within affected communities themselves, rather than just white people organizing a demo and expect-

ing people of color to support it. This itself is no new tactic, as many liberal white groups try to create change using this idea. The problem is that they don't get their hands dirty. They are conveniently supported by status quo state mechanisms, and haven't won the confidence and respect of disaffected communities of color. It takes being in the streets to threaten those in power into beginning to understand the extent of racism and authoritarian imperialism. There are, however, many grassroots community groups of color who fight against racism, and it is of utmost importance to lend support and respect their leadership. Instead of only asking them to "join in" on our marches and rallies, we must find those groups that share a revolutionary perspective and offer our support in destroying racism. White people must also commit to discussing and educating about racism with white people, as we are familiar with white culture and have larger inroads in those communities.

We are at a critical time within US history. With the Civil Rights gains being rolled back piece by liberal piece, as well as the recent overturning of sanctions against South Africa, and the rulings against access to free legal abortions and the current "gag" rule, we are threatened with the return to an ultra-conservative, and ultimately proto-fascist American State. With such a powerfully repressive apparatus in place, it is of utmost importance for current revolutionaries to use any and all means of countering this turn towards right wing conservatism. This means hard fucking work and realizing the necessity of using creative ways to counteract the spectacular lies fed to people. Some ideas might be to organize a

(Continued on page 9)

BY KIERAN FRAZIER

**S** EVEN HUNDRED PEOPLE filled the plaza in front of the Northrup Auditorium at the University of Minnesota on October 9th to protest a neo-Nazi student group. The Coalition Against White Supremacy (in which Anti-Racist Action plays a strong role) sponsored the demonstration in response to the formation of the "White Student Union" and the viciously racist opinion pieces its members were getting printed in the University newspaper. The crowd was loud and lively chanting "No Nazis! No KKK! No Fascist USA!" and "Racist Sexist, Anti-Queer! Nazi Scum Get Out of Here!" and cheering speakers from the African Student Cultural Center, Asian American Student Cultural Center, the Student Gay Lesbian Bi Association, the Young Socialist Alliance, the Progressive Student Organization, and Anti-Racist Action among others. Heading up a small counterdemonstration was Tom David, the leader of the white student union and author of an opinion piece in the *Minnesota Daily* that began by quoting Bob Matthews, the leader of the neo-Nazi terrorist group the Order, and ended by calling for the immediate creation of a whites-only republic within the US and posting the National Guard at the borders with the instructions "If it ain't white waste it!"

While ARA would've been down for it, the mood on campus and within the coalition was against forcibly removing or simply smashing the fascists. So a long banner reading "STUDENTS TAKE ACTION! FIGHT RACISM! Anti-Racist Action," along with a PSO banner, were used to block the Nazis and minimize their presence. After nearly an hour the Nazis decided it was time to leave, and a contingent of demonstration security escorted them from campus. While some group security tried to keep other demonstrators from following, some ARA folks started chanting "No Nazis, No KKK No Fascist U.S.A!" and "On Campus, on the Streets, Nazi Scum Taste

# ARA Confronts Racists in Minneapolis, Again



St. Cloud State Professor speaks in front of A.R.A. banner at Black Student Strike (See Page 3).

Defeat!" hoping to get some kind of spontaneous march started. This was partly successful — about 75 or 80 people joined in.

ARA and other Twin Cities activists first became aware of Tom David when, in late July, he placed an ad in the *Minnesota Daily* inviting students to join his white student union. Several much-hyped stories in the *Daily* followed. Although at first Tom David claimed to have no racist intentions, seeking only to "promote white culture," ARA smelled a Nazi. An ARA member called David pretending to be racist skinhead interested in joining. In this conversation David revealed his true politics, informing us that he corresponded with Tom Metzger and William Pierce author of the neo-Nazi cult classic *The Turner Diaries*. With this information and a revealing interview in the *Daily*, it was obvious what David's agenda really was. Anti-Racist Action planned the entire campus with informational flyers about racists organizing at the University and urging students, faculty and on campus workers to militantly oppose them.

Next, ARA initiated a meeting to form a coalition the first week of the fall semester. Invitations were given to all the student cultural centers and all the progressive student groups but the meeting was not promoted publicly until the *Daily* got wind of the meeting and urged students to attend. Two hundred students showed up at the meeting and the Coalition Against White Supremacy was born; larger, whiter, and slightly more liberal than expected.

The coalition remained large before and after the October 9th demonstration, and ARA has continued to participate, although not without problems. Because ARA's membership is both young and politically anti-authoritarian (which are very good things) the group has not always been well organized or prepared for other groups' political bullying.

Other tensions within the coalitions are coming to a head, whether some kind of unity can be maintained remains to be seen. One of the bigger disagreements is over a forum held

the week after the demonstrations. The forum was sponsored by a number of campus groups (who are also part of the coalition) to discuss the implications of white supremacy. So far so good.

The fact that ARA was not invited to endorse or participate in the forum seemed curious but not too serious, until it was learned that Tom David of the White Student Union was to be a panelist. ARA generally holds the position that all Nazi organizing from speaking to violent attacks must be opposed because it is all part of one strategy, a strategy of genocide. The other main reason A.R.A. opposed giving David a seat on the panel was our feeling that the question of whether David had a legitimate ideology, whether his ideas were bad or good, had been settled weeks ago. It was time to move on to the question of how to stop the White Student Union. To give David another opportunity to spread his racist garbage, to put him on a panel with anti-racists was a foolish move.

ARA handed out a flyer at the forum asking people to join us in shouting down the Nazi when it was his turn to speak. ARA and our supporters numbered about 30, the total audience was a few hundred. When David rose to speak there was lots of noise, many joined in jeering the Nazi, many also thought David's "freedom of speech" should be respected and attempted to silence us (go figure). David managed to get through his speech but scurried away with police protection right afterward — not sticking around for questions or ARA's greeting party. After the forum, dozens of students stopped by the A.R. lit. table to check out information, argue with us about "free speech," or ask how to join.

It is important to note that David is not just some racist kook, but a national socialist organizer, part of a national movement towards regroupment of the far right (skinhead street fighters, anti-semitic farmers, neo-Nazi intellectuals like David). Although this movement has suffered some recent defeats, namely the Southern Poverty Law Center's successful suit against Tom Metzger which led to the organizational collapse of the white Aryan Resistance, in the Twin Cities this process of regroupment is moving firmly ahead. The Free Association Forum is a coalition of the Minnesota Klu Klux Klan, the Posse Comitatus, the national Socialist Movement, the Northern Hammer Skinheads, and David's White Student Union.

These Fascist organizations are a real threat, and therefore must be countered by a militant anti-racist movement. Anarchist participation in such a movement will make the movement more democratic and more militant, and will force us to deal with questions that have been ducked for too long, like what is our analysis of white supremacy and national oppression and why the anarchist movement is so white.

(See Page 13 for a Late Breaking Development!)



# JONNA

Interview with Jonna, a longtime activist in ARA and the Twin Cities in general, as well as one fucking cool human being. Interview by Joel, with a groggy Chris Cris present.

Joel: Why don't you tell a little bit about yourself first.

Jonna: Well, I grew up all over the place because my mom was a hippie artist. She was poor, real poor, so we lived in this big red truck named Betsy with a dog named Beast. I was born in Brooklyn, then we moved to living in a tent in upstate New York, then we went on the road. We moved to Soho, Ohio, on farms, in cities, in the forest. We moved here in the middle of fifth grade. That's kind of how I grew up. I'm Jewish by heritage, which is really important to me, to remember my culture, but I think the religion is really patriarchal, hierarchical, and doesn't really offer much empowering, but the culture itself does, because it's a really great culture of resistance to fascism. I'm queer and I came out when I was thirteen as a raging lesbian separatist and I hated men and anything that had to do with men, and that led me to being a radical activist. Now I'm in a pretty long term heterosexual lovership and that is really interesting [laughs]. I like him a lot; it's very hard. He's a very good friend, and that's probably why it sometimes works.

Joel: Why don't you explain a little bit about what ARA is and what it's doing.

Jonna: Well, ARA has changed a lot since its first inception. What ARA was was a group of young, working class, multi-racial skinheads called the Baldies. [They emerged] as a response to a group of nazi skinheads called the White Knights, who were organizing in Minneapolis. The Baldies wanted a more broad-based resistance to the nazis, so they created Anti-Racist Action. It didn't turn out to be very broad-based, though. It was very internal and very macho, very male-dominated. That's how the Baldies were, period. But they were very successful in beating out the nazi skinheads, which is so incredible, and they were youth and they were organizing as youth. They held press conferences, they did a lot of propaganda, a lot of education, they did a lot of really great things.

Joel: What's ARA now?

Jonna: ARA now is still a pretty youth-based organization. It's much, much broader. Still pretty white but there are a couple people of color. It addresses oppressions including racism, sexism and homophobia and heterosexism and class. What we're trying to do is understand how all these oppressions intersect, perpetuate each other, feed off each other, and in order to fight racism we need to fight all the oppressions together. ARA has a very anarchic way of organizing and working within the group. There are queers within the group, people from different class backgrounds, people who have dropped out of high school, people who have their bachelor's degrees and are on to their master's. The level of militancy is still pretty high.

Joel: What's ARA doing right now?

Jonna: Right now ARA is embarking on an incredible adventure with a new structure, which I'm very hopeful about. We're divid-

ing up into three smaller groups so we can be more rooted in community activism. I think it's really important to be rooted in communities because that's who we are. We are accountable to our community and our community is accountable to us, and it's where we draw strength from.

Joel: Where are these communities?

Jonna: These communities are in south Minneapolis, the University of Minnesota, and the east side of St. Paul. The reason why it's specifically the east side of St. Paul is that it's a really large nazi stronghold. So these three groups will be meeting autonomously, but we'll also be meeting as a large group every other week to talk about strategy. We're going to be caucusing with oppressed and oppressor groups and then we're going to be talking about things like how me as a queer, working with heterosexuals, how do we together fight racism while still addressing homophobia and heterosexism. The world is ours!

Joel: You strongly emphasize the connections and interplay among all the oppressions. Why then the name Anti-Racist Action? Why the emphasis on racism in your name?

Jonna: Well, I didn't choose the name.

Joel: But a lot of things in ARA are geared around racism, too.

Jonna: Yeah. Well, my visions are always toward complete revolution and how to build a revolutionary movement and I feel as a white person, in order to build a revolutionary movement, I really need to work on fighting racism cos right now genocide is being committed against people of color, and that's a really big priority to me. Also, the group came about and was modeled after Anti-Fascist Action in England. I would like the group to eventually be Anti-Fascist Action, but I think the whole idea of what fascism here in the United States is, people don't really understand it yet, and so we really couldn't call ourselves that yet.

Joel: How did you become involved in ARA?

Jonna: I was in a group called the Revolutionary Anarchist Bowling League, and we were trying out a new structure of breaking down into bowling teams, and one of the bowling teams was an anti-racist bowling team. We decided that maybe it would be a good idea to start ARA up again, because at that point it had dissolved. One of the guys in RABL was also a Baldie — Kieran — so he called up some Baldies and we called up some other people and we had our first meeting together. It was also in response to a lot of racist incidents that had been happening, like Tyceol Nelson, who was shot in the back and killed by police.

Joel: ARA has a somewhat controversial stand on violence. Why don't you explain it. Why is ARA NOT nonviolent and what is the need for violence?

Jonna: Because we believe that people need to survive, and that in order to survive we need to defend ourselves and fight

back, and to make a space where we can breathe and live, and create. That often means beating people out of our space and out of other people's space who maybe can't do it for themselves at that time. I think the reason it's so controversial is that it works. It works, as a tactic used with other tactics. I don't believe that beating up nazis is the only tactic to do anti-racist work, but it is a very good tactic and we've seen it work really well. I also think that a lot of white liberals who talk about pacifism can also be construed as pretty racist, or classist, or sexist, because of those positions of power [white middle class people find themselves in.] You may not ever be in a situation of a physical confrontation, but a woman on the street who has an attacker upon her who wants to rape her, what is she going to do, roll over? No, she's going to fight back, and a lot of people who have privilege don't find themselves in those kinds of confrontations, like with a nazi going, "Fucking nigger, fucking nigger!" You have to fight back.

Joel: I don't think a lot of nonviolent people would have a problem with a woman fighting back in an attempted rape, but what about, say, Martin Luther King's organizational tactics, organizing broad-based movements based on nonviolent strategies, which a lot of groups structure themselves around today. What is the advantage in not denying the necessity of violence in mass-based organizing as opposed to the Martin Luther King approach, which almost every group in America takes.

Jonna: Yeah. Well, I think it [the nonviolent approach] is kind of unrealistic. I don't think it works. We can look, historically and heritorically, at armed movements and we can look historically and heritorically at pacifist movements and see actually what works. And also, racism is so institutionalized as well as one-on-one assaults; we're talking about bringing down a system, and that is going to take a really big, armed revolution, so you gotta build somewhere.

Joel: Do you think it's stance on violence hurts or helps ARA in its dealings with the community?

Jonna: I guess it depends on which community you talk about. It has given us a really interesting place in the progressive/radical/liberal community, where they're either afraid of us or don't take our politics seriously. We've become the disposable youth. They can ignore us because they think we're not thinking our shit out because we're using these tactics. It also creates really incredible allies, people who know this is the right thing to do because they've had to do it their whole lives.

Joel: Like who?

Jonna: Like people who are on the street. Poor people, of all different colors, and women. As far as building allies with different communities, it's really about explaining tactics and

really explaining how the tactic of violence fits into a much broader analysis. I think that the more we talk about it, people will understand and support and come to build ARA or groups like ARA. People don't quite know what's up yet.

Joel: It seems to tie in a lot with class. The nonviolence stance nowadays is a pretty white, privileged class thing. Another thing ARA gets a lot of shit for, especially as of late around the university is the freedom of speech stuff. Why don't you explain ARA's stance on freedom of speech, because "freedom of speech" is such a sacred cow in American culture, theoretically.

Jonna: Exactly, that's the whole thing, it's theoretical. The Bill of Rights sounds like this way rad piece of paper, but that's the thing: it's just a piece of paper. The goon squad, known as the police, we are supposedly defending what's said in this piece of paper, are just doing things for their own good. The whole premise free speech is a lie, and so we're trying to reframe the whole argument. Everyone cries, "Freedom of speech, freedom of speech!" but we don't have it, so how can it be taken away? And even if we did have freedom of speech, the power of the people in ARA... mean we don't have very much power in the social scale in the United States so how can we silence anybody?

Joel: Explain to me your stance on freedom of speech, because obviously ARA is structured based on everyone having an equal say and everyone having the right to speak, so that seems very much like freedom of speech, but then on the other hand a lot of people in ARA say that freedom of speech is a myth. When you say freedom of speech is a myth, it turns a lot of people off and seems contradictory to the actual practices ARA, so if you could make that distinction for me...

Jonna: Sure. The speech that fascists speak

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# 12 THIS FANZINE...



preaching genocide and hate, and that is not about freedom, that is not about liberation, it is about killing people and subordination and domination and perpetuating a hierarchy. The kind of free speech I want to be a part of is empowering everybody and liberation for everybody and I don't feel that by allowing fascists to speak, this is going to create true freedom for everybody. The people that invite fascists to speak on the radio or anywhere, I think that should be disrupted and not allowed to happen because it's not building toward true liberation.

Joel: Where do you draw the line? What about misogynists speaking? What about statist speaking?

Jonna: I believe in not letting misogynists speak, too.

Joel: But that basically silences 99.9% of the United States of America.

Jonna: You have to start somewhere. We have to start somewhere. It's very unrealistic to silence, say, the porn industry. But, what we can do is encourage men and hold other men accountable for their misogyny and men organizing together to fight misogyny, like men's participation in the Take Back the Night march, and having a No Pig Zone. I think that's a very big part in silencing the cops. We can start small, like trying to shut down porn shops and boycotting them.

Joel: I think ARA really hurts itself by saying free speech is a myth, because in practice ARA is very much into letting people have their say. It seems to me that the freedom of speech issue is a structural thing, like what you were saying about misogynistic and homophobic speech. The whole idea is to empower people and shutting people up is not going to empower people, except for fascists. Fascists are fascists, they're not going to change and have to be beaten out of existence.

Chris: The whole phrase "freedom of speech" is patented and trademarked in America, so yeah it is a myth in that you can't say—

Jonna: Well, freedom of speech in America assumes that we all possess the same amount of power. I mean, here comes the fascist or the nazi, and then here comes the person who's going to debate the fascist. It's assuming we're on the same level and we're not. These people (nazis) are white, male, and they appear to be heterosexual, and those traits are totally valued in this country. They have the most access to and the most power in this country. So here I come along, this Jewish queer woman who's a revolutionary anarchist who's supposedly going to debate this guy. We do not have the same power and within the structure of ARA we try to be as nonhierarchical as possible, so within our meetings we can experiment with the ideas of free speech because we can actually debate each other. When you're debating a nazi you don't come at it from such an equal position. Within ARA, maybe we can start to look at what it actually is like to have freedom of speech.

Joel: So it's structural. Free speech assumes that people start from the same social position in society, when they really don't.

Jonna: Right.

Joel: Back to the violence thing, to jump around a bit. Do you think ARA's stance on violence excludes you as a woman in any way?

Jonna: No way!

Joel: A lot of feminist arguments assert—and the university ARA has gotten shit from women making such arguments—that not taking a nonviolent stance is really macho and patriarchal.

Jonna: I think that it is so empowering for women to have control over their physical surroundings and to be able to create a space for themselves. Sometimes that means forging it out physically. Women have been stereotyped as physically weak and that even if we are strong we should appear to be weak because that makes us more desirable. I want to smash those ideas. We can be whatever we want to be and if that means being physically strong and acting upon it then we should be able to do that for ourselves. It has a lot to do with self-determination. As far as it being a macho thing, working with men and being a physical force with men, ARA has taken a lot of time out—though not as much time as I'd like—in times of incredible crisis to talk about our motivations for action, like asking the men, Are you clear about why you're fighting, why you're using that as a tactic, how do you feel about not acting as defenders of the women in the group but working with the women as allies and as equals and helping the women be as empowered as the men already are. A lot

of women don't grow up getting into fistfights with their friends or wrestling, so again, it's about how we come at things from an equal place. I think it's about reframing the entire perspective. Physical fighting doesn't have to be a macho thing, it can be an action creating self-determination.

Joel: How does ARA go about including women in its activities, and does ARA do it fairly?

Jonna: Fair is a point of view. In my point of view, I don't think it's fair because we live in a misogynist society that has taught men to degrade women, and no matter how conscious men are about being equal, about being fair, being nice, misogyny and sexism and all the oppressions are still played out in ARA. But, as far as facilitation, as far as putting out leaflets, as far as political discussions and arguments, women are invited and take a really strong place in the group. It is now who we become, who we are. Who we have become, to have women in leadership positions, helping make decisions. We really try to be collective, and since there are women in the group, it just becomes part of the collective process. . . We take things that are "women's issues" and they become ARA issues as well.

Joel: How well do you think sexism and homophobia and class is dealt with in ARA, and how well do you think people deal with it in the group?

Jonna: I think it's played out in subtle and not-so-subtle ways, in the ways people listen or don't listen or the way we interrupt each other or whose ideas are valued more than others. I think that's really where the oppression is played out. I think that we're all really scared to hold each other accountable on a personal level within the group. It's just starting to happen, but it's really scary.

Joel: What do you mean?

Jonna: Like, I'm really good friends with people in the group, but I'm really scared to put myself out there, and I'm so scared of appearing to be the nag or the bitch or to be taking too much time or turning ARA meetings into a therapy group. I'm really concerned about these things, but at the same time, people are being silenced by these oppressions. Just by saying to you at the meeting before last that I'd prefer you saying "queer" instead of "gay" and this is why, that was so scary to me. I was like, oh my god, maybe I'm silencing Joel or maybe he'll have a really hard time with me now or maybe he's feeling a lot of shame now. It becomes this really big hyped up thing, but we really need to do these simple things. We come from different realities, you know, and you may not know that that's a hard thing for me, and it's my responsibility to let you know. Here we are, white people fighting racism, fuck, we really have to open up our mouths and say, "Hey man, I think that's really fucked up." We really need to take these risks, we really do, and I don't think we take enough of

them on an interpersonal level. I think these caucuses that we'll be having will begin to paint that out, cos I don't think we know how to do that, really. As people we're so isolated from each other in this society, we don't know how to have healthy intimacy and relate to each other in a good way.

Joel: How well would you say ARA does this compared to other groups?

Jonna: Excellent. I've been in women's groups and lesbian groups that of course are much more internal, but as far as balancing internal and external [politics] I think we're moving in a good way. The only other group that I think that worked better was RABL, and we were too extreme; we would do a lot of internal stuff and it wasn't balanced enough, we didn't have the rhythm. I have a lot of hope in ARA, and I kind of have a lot of hope by default because I have to have hope in something, but I do have a lot of hope in ARA. I mean, the structure, I've never been in a group that's had this interesting a structure to try to help us build analysis, build trust, build interpersonal stuff, and actually be action-oriented and change the world we live in.

Joel: What kind of community outreach is ARA involved in?

Jonna: Not as much as I'd like. All of our fliers, literature, invites people to meetings. I think that's great. We work in coalition with other groups. I'd like to see it get a lot broader.

Joel: What directions would you like to see it take, community-wise?

Jonna: Everything. I guess my priorities are working with different communities of people of color, becoming an actual ally in their struggle for self-determination.

Joel: How can we do this?

Jonna: If I had the map, Joel, we would've been doing it a long time ago. Um, by walking our talk. By actually showing different communities of color that we are a good ally to them. We can do that as white people by figuring out our stake in white supremacy and fighting to bring it down. More specifically, by going to the boat landings, by putting our bodies on the line... going to demonstrations, helping to support them in their struggles as well as doing our own thing in our own community that fights racism. By supporting queers bashing back, by making a presence at queer pride and supporting the self-determination of that community.

Joel: What are some of the limits of ARA, organizationally and effectiveness?

Jonna: Well, we grew up in a society that taught us to be oppressors, so that really limits us until we figure out our oppressor identities and how to undo them and to be allies of the people that we oppress. Organizationally and structurally, well, we're not as big as I'd like us to be, and the more people involved the more we can do, hopefully.

Joel: Well, look at this example: we're very democratic, but it takes us a long time to make decisions. It takes us a long time to even decide when to have meetings. Sometimes when I'm in the meetings I have a sense that this democratic process... I'm kind of worried that it's white centered, because I can't imagine some homeboys sitting in our meetings and quickly walking out, saying, this is boring bullshit.

Chris: It's become a debate society.  
Joel: Well, I don't know about that. What are your thoughts on that?  
Jonna: Well, I don't think it's a debate society. [the tape ended here. . .]

## ANTI-RACIST ACTION

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## KILLS FASCISTS

## 13



# On The Prowl

## Anti-Racist Action And Developing Anti-Fascist Strategies In Toronto

by Lola

The growth of the far right in Toronto is not a new phenomenon. The Heritage Front is not the first Toronto-based fascist group but the most recent example of a movement which dates back to the 1930s: when the Canadian Nazi Party ran candidates in Toronto; when the Balmy Beach Club in the east end of the city was renamed the Swastika Club; when nazi thugs attacked Jewish youth at Christie Pits Park near downtown, youth who defended themselves and their community by physically trouncing the nazi mob. Even the nazis of the 1930s cannot be isolated from the history of racism in Canada - from the genocidal policies used against the First Nations to the history of violent racism directed against the African and Asian communities.

This ongoing legacy of racism provides the fertile grounds for the growth of groups like the Heritage Front and Church of the Creator today. It's the historical context of racism which makes some white people vulnerable to these hateful organizations, and the strong links between groups in Canada, the U.S., Europe and South Africa make the white supremacist movement dangerous to us all.

It is often tempting to ignore neo-nazi organizing and violence. It is sometimes easier to see them as misfits or isolated extremists rather than face the larger problems of widespread racism, homophobia and anti-Semitism in society. But the first step to confronting hate violence is understanding how racism and prejudice has played a crucial role in the history of Canada, and how the struggles against it - from the time of Columbus to today - must inform and shape both our anti-racist analysis and activism.

### Who Are The People In Your Neighbourhood?

Many of us in Ontario see neo-nazi, Ku Klux Klan and other far right organizing as something that happens in the U.S.; or in Alberta, Saskatchewan or Quebec - yet southwestern Ontario is the most active area of organized white supremacy in Canada. The region is perhaps the organizational centre for the Canadian far right.

The leadership of the local neo-nazi movement is very experienced, many of them having worked with Toronto racist organizations since the 1970s and 1980s. Some have travelled internationally to meet and work with their European and U.S. counterparts. Many have done prison time for "the cause".

The main public figure in Toronto is Wolfgang Droege. Droege has been active in the Canadian far right since the 1970s when he worked in both the Toronto based Western Guard and later with the Canadian Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, where he rose to become the number two man in the national organization. Droege is a friend and "racial comrade" of both David Duke, the former KKK leader turned racist politician and U.S. Presidential candidate, and Tom Metzger, leader of the violent California-based White Aryan Resistance (WAR).

The Heritage Front was founded in 1988 when Droege and other white supremacists left the racist Nationalist Party of Canada. The Front bases itself on the National Association for the Advancement of White People, the organization formed by David Duke after leaving the Klan. The NAAWP presented itself not as a

white supremacist organization but as a "white separatist" group concerned with "equal rights for whites".

"Equal rights for whites" has become a popular slogan used by the right to justify attacks on the traditional targets of white supremacy. Under this banner, groups such as the Heritage Front denounce women's rights, non-white immigration, lesbian & gay rights, Native land rights and educational curriculum which stresses anti-racism or tells the history of Nazi Germany and the Holocaust - all of which in their minds adds up to a conspiracy to destroy the white race. Like the NAAWP, the Front hides the blatantly racist and anti-Semitic rhetoric of the past behind rants against immigration laws, crime, lesbian & gay rights, affirmative action, perceived attacks on (their) free speech, anti-racists, etc. in hopes of appealing to existing prejudices in white Canadian society.

The Heritage Front runs a telephone hotline which is used to broadcast verbal attacks against the communities which don't fit into their world vision - communities which in reality represent just about all of us. It also plays an essential role in recruitment as the initial public contact point for unaffiliated racists and fascists in the region. The Heritage Front also publish a monthly magazine called Upfront which carries articles by both Front members and fascist organizations in the U.S. and Europe. It even boasts a regular column by David Duke. The Front holds several secret rallies a year often featuring prominent KKK and neo-nazi leaders and Holocaust deniers from the U.S. and Europe. (The meetings are not advertised for fear of a massive anti-racist response, such as that organized by ARA in November 1992 which shut down a HF gathering.)

Despite their claims of merely seeking "free speech" and "open debate", the Heritage Front has time and time again revealed its true violent nature. In June 1993, three Front members, including Droege and his henchman Pete Mitrevski, were arrested on assault and weapons charges following an attempted assault of anti-racists. (An attempt which sent several fascists to hospital.) The other Front member arrested, Chris Newhook, has already been convicted and is now serving a 12 month sentence. Another Front diehard, Elisse Hategan, is facing charges of distributing hate material targeting the Black community.

Droege himself has already done prison time in the U.S. for his racist activities, including three years for his part in an attempted neo-nazi armed invasion of the island of Dominica, which was intended to establish a base for the international fascist movement. One of Droege's responsibilities after the invasion was to have been running a cocaine processing plant.

The flip side to the Heritage Front's "soft" image is the Church of the Creator (COTC), perhaps the most violent neo-nazi organization in North America. The COTC has chapters in the U.S., Canada, Europe and South Africa and is known for paramilitary training and



Anti-Fascist Demonstration Organized By ARA On January 25/93

using violent attacks as part of its efforts to make the earth a "whites-only" planet.

The "church" part of the organization is based upon the teachings of the millionaire racist and one time Ontario-resident, Ben Klassen (who took the Hitler-thing full circle in August 1993 by committing suicide). Klassen wrote the "White Man's Bible" which serves as the ideological/"spiritual" basis for COTC. It provides a "religious" excuse for their violence and hatred by teaching that white people alone are made in the image of god and that all other races (or "mud races" as they call them) are inferior.

The Toronto COTC is the organization's main representative in Canada and among the most important chapters internationally. COTC people from the Toronto/Hamilton area have played major roles in the international leadership and the most popular COTC rock band, RaHoWa (short for Racial Holy War), is based here. RaHoWa and other COTC bands are crucial in fundraising for their violent racist activities and in recruiting young people and skinheads as stormtroopers. The concerts pump up the bonehead fans with violent hatred and "siege heils", often resulting in assaults on the public after the shows let out. In June 1993, Heritage Front skinhead Jason Hoolans brutally assaulted a Tamil man after a RaHoWa gig, leaving the man partially paralysed.

Local COTC boss and RaHoWa "singer" George Burdi (aka Rev. Eric Hawthorne) recently helped found a Detroit-based record label called Resistance Records to make and distribute neo-nazi recordings across North America and Europe. The label's first release is a RaHoWa compact disc entitled "Declaration of War".

The Toronto COTC also boasts a Security Legion (or "White Berets"), a group of skinheads who train in martial arts and weapons and provide security for many neo-nazi events in the city. Toronto media recently identified Eric Fischer, a former sergeant in the Canadian Airborne Regiment, as the leader and trainer of the Security Legion. Eric, along with his brother and fellow Security Legions member, Elkar (another Airborne veteran), were arrested during the summer of 1993 with a third COTC bonehead for kidnapping a Heritage Front member, assaulting him, and threatening to kill him by injecting him with window cleaner. Another Security Legions member, Richard Manley, was recently sentenced to nine months in prison for illegal possession of weapons and ammunition. (He's another Airborne veteran... coincidence???)

The fact that the HF and COTC apparently use

different methods does not reflect a split but an attempt to build a broad racist front attracting all manner of potential recruits, from older bigots to younger militants. Not only do Burdi and Droegge associate openly, but Burdi is often a prominent figure at Heritage Front rallies, where he either speaks or performs with his band. In April 1993, Burdi appeared with Droegge at an Ottawa press conference announcing the launch of the Heritage Front's Ottawa chapter. It's apparent that Burdi (who was arrested for the May 1993 assault of an Ottawa anti-racist) is effectively the number two man in the HF.

The Heritage Front also acts as a front for the movement. As a public organization, unlike the secretive COTC, the Heritage Front is a contact point for newly initiated racists and fascists who can later be directed towards more violent groups.

The primary recruiting ground for both these organizations is young white people. It is from these ranks that the fascists, as they have done in Europe, hope to draw their stormtroopers. In this effort, local high schools have become one of the major political battle grounds of the 1990s.

#### On The Prowl

Anti-Racist Action (ARA) formed in the Fall of 1992 to organize a street level presence to oppose the growth of the fascist movement in Toronto. The primary impetus came from young people, many of them high school students. Their main objectives were to oppose the neo-Nazi presence in both the political and social arenas. The former was to take place in the high schools, where the Heritage Front were and are actively recruiting young people. The latter was to confront them in clubs, bars and other social arenas where skinheads and neo-Nazi bands were beginning to build a presence and to physically attack people of colour, anti-racists and punks.

While the focus was clearly on youth organizing, ARA also set about to explore new and creative methods of organizing and to expand the boundaries of the traditional forms of protest in Toronto. The young activists saw the need to challenge what they saw as depressing, disempowering, and ultimately ineffective modes of protest which the left has fallen into. ARA aimed to move away from boring pickets in front of faceless buildings and instead build a militant street level movement to fight grassroots fascism which would at the same time work in coalition with other groups around broader issues.

Along with the critique of the mobilization strategies of the left, ARA also incorporates an inherent challenge to traditional political dogmas. Distrust of old-style ideological restrictions led to the creation of a political perspective which, in essence, borrows from the best of many traditions. Elements from anarchism, marxism, the German Autonomes, First Nations organizing, and popular culture are synthesized within ARA to create a political perspective which speaks to the people involved and allows the group to look beyond the constraints of any one tradition to attempt to create a new way of working politically.

A central element to the overall ARA approach is the cultivation of an anti-racist/anti-fascist counterculture. This has proceeded primarily through the organizing of regular Rock Against Racism concerts and also weekend parties, as well as the creation of an ARA "style". The group also actively circulates buttons and T-shirts [the group's motto is "On The Prowl" and their logo

is a tiger leaping on a swastika]. ARA has recognized that one of the main attractions which the nazis have for young people is the sense of both rebelliousness and community which such organizations provide. The nazis certainly recognize this dynamic, which is why they have put so much effort into developing neo-Nazi bands as recruiting instruments. ARA realizes that if it is to be effective politically, it also has to be "hip".

Few young people are attracted to fascist organizations on the basis of ideology alone. Most are attracted to the cultural scene first, through the music, parties, or friends and only later drawn into the movement and its ideas. Rather than ignore this reality, ARA has actively sought to promote a compelling, vibrant, and fun culture of resistance to attract young people and provide an alternative to the nazis. At the same time, the providing of an active social element to a political organization helps not only to keep activists and others interested but also provides a forum for people to build up the friendship and trust necessary for effective political work.

ARA demonstrations have been more militant and confrontational than has traditionally been the case in Toronto. The events have consistently drawn large

nazis to walk past and into the front doors of the court. Several demonstrators required brief hospitalization.

During the media circus which followed, both Police Chief William McCormack and Metro Police Services Board chair Susan Eng admitted in the press that the reason the nazis were not taken in through one of the four alternative entrances was because Droegge demanded to be taken in the main doors (which raises the question of who is actually giving the order for police to attack anti-racists?).

Inside the courtroom itself, police continued their attacks by assaulting members of the American Indian Movement who were acting as security for Native Centre representative, Rodney Bobiwash. AIM members were thrown to the floor by police and handcuffed after they intervened to protect Bobiwash from an assault by Heritage Front supporters. After the demonstration, two ARA members were arrested on their way home on bogus charges of assaulting police, one for allegedly throwing an egg the other for spitting. (The two anti-fascists, one of whom was a minor at the time of the incident, were eventually convicted of lesser charges and received probation).

The persons targeted for arrest are significant. Both were on the front line of the demonstration and played active roles in repelling the horse charge, and one was also the final public ARA speaker at the demonstration dispersal point.

Despite the police attack and the arrests, most saw the demonstration as a huge success. Not only did anti-racists outnumber the nazis by more than ten to one, but the attack clearly revealed on which side the police stood. The aftermath of the 25th also revealed on which side other anti-racist organizations fall in a crisis.

On January 27th, both the Human Rights League of B'nai Brith and the Canadian Jewish Congress denounced the demonstration in the media. Karen Mock, national spokesperson for B'nai Brith, accused ARA of "jumping on a bandwagon and using this high profile anti-racist initiative to attempt to create disorder and

take the law in their own hands."

Gerda Frieberg of the CJC stated that "The Canadian Jewish Congress does not support these kind of actions." It was clear to some that the self-serving media ploy by B'nai Brith and CJC was intended more to solidify and justify their own close working relationships with police rather than advance the anti-racist movement. Indeed, recent revelations in the U.S. of Anti-Defamation League (B'nai Brith's U.S. counterpart) collaboration with the San Francisco Police Department in spying on progressive and leftist organizations should certainly make committed anti-racists in Toronto wary of that organization's true political goals.

The denunciation by these organizations was also significant in that it played directly to the police and media propaganda line of separating "legitimate" anti-racist groups from "illegitimate" ones, thereby hoping to criminalize ARA and justify unprovoked police violence against the demonstration. However, much of that attempt was derailed in the community, if not in the press itself, by the fact that such "legitimate" groups as the Native Canadian Centre and the Montreal-based Canadian Centre on Racism and Prejudice (as well as representatives from the Black community, women's movement, and labour movement) supported ARA completely and publicly denounced the police's actions.

Although ARA continued to organize actions fol-

# SMASH THE NAZI FRONT

On January 25 neo-Nazi hate groups will march on a Human Rights hearing to intimidate and silence those who speak out against racism and hatred.

Anti-racists will gather at the south end of Queen's Park at 8:15 a.m. to march on the courts and confront Toronto's fascist movement.



## NO to racism, NO to fascism, NEVER AGAIN ANTI-RACIST ACTION

numbers and their atmosphere of anger and a willingness to meet the fascists face-to-face have both intimidated the neo-nazis while attracting the attention of the police and the press.

For example, a large and determined demonstration in November 1992 outside a "secret" Heritage Front meeting at the Roma Restaurant caused the police to shut the meeting down. Angry nazis were forced to flee under police protection while at the same time trying to avoid the hail of eggs thrown at them by the demonstrators.

A January 25, 1993 demonstration called outside a Toronto courthouse was to be a pivotal moment in shaping the organization. The Canadian Human Rights Commission has been in the process of hearing a complaint brought by the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto against the Front's telephone hotline. An announced fascist march on the courthouse in support of the Heritage Front was met by an ARA demonstration of over 500 people who blocked the main doors to the building.

Rather than take the small contingent of nazis into the courthouse through the back door, the police instead chose to charge the anti-racists from two sides. Mounted police rode into the front line of the demonstration, trampling people and whacking them with riding crops, while officers on foot rushed into one side, kicking and punching anti-racists as they did so. The "reason" for the attack was to move the ARA demonstration to allow the



Following the January 25th police attack, including demonstrations against local school teacher Paul Fromm, who has been active in the Toronto far-Right for the past 25 years, the next major event did not occur until June 11th.

### Behind The Front

While the Heritage Front and the Church of the Creator maintain publicly that they are not violent groups but are merely interested in open debate on the issues, their behaviour to date reveals quite the opposite. In response to community action on many levels against the HF and COTC, the nazis have slowly been waging an escalating terror campaign against anti-racists. This campaign has primarily manifested itself in patterns of harassment and intimidation, but has recently moved into violent physical attacks.

The campaign began in the fall of 1992. On the night of November 28th, nazis painted swastikas outside several prominent anti-racist targets in Toronto including the Native Canadian Centre and a socialist bookstore. Other targets hit at that same time which were not mentioned in media reports were KYTES, a community theatre and employment centre in Kensington Market which at that time was serving as ARA's regular meeting place, as well as the home of an ARA member.

This was followed quite quickly by a campaign of harassing and later threatening phone calls to some ARA members. While several people received calls, the fascists chose to concentrate their efforts against women. This targeting of women has been their pattern since that time, an obvious reflection of their inherent misogyny. While men have received calls, the harassment for the most part has not been of the same violent intensity as that against women and has not continued past a period of two weeks.

One woman was also targeted physically for surveillance, and the nazis placed people in cars outside her home to follow her and track her movements, who she met with, etc. Another woman was the subject of a racist flyer containing attacks against the Black community while listing her name, address, and phone number as the contact person for the fictitious white supremacist group which claimed authorship of the flyer. The intention was to give the false impression that the anti-racist activist was a nazi and thereby subject her to harassment from members of the community.

These attacks soon escalated from intimidation tactics to physical assault and arson. During the spring a campaign of terror was waged against Youthlink, two shelters for young women. Early in 1993 a Heritage Front member who was a resident of the shelter was ejected by the staff for intimidating other residents by wearing nazi paraphernalia and bringing racist materials into the shelter.

The nazis responded to this by launching a series of lesbophobic attacks against Youthlink staff on their hotline. A campaign of threatening phone calls and physical surveillance of staff ensued which eventually culminated in an arson attack against one of the shelters in late March. A staff member was also assaulted in her home by skinheads. During that same period, a member of the Black Action Defence Committee (the main Toronto group organizing against police racism and violence) was attacked by five nazis one evening after leaving the BADC office.

In our analysis, this slow and deliberate escalation of violence is not haphazard but calculated. The slow escalation has two identifiable goals for the movement. The first is to test the response of police. The nazis need to see how far they can push things before feeling pressure from law enforcement. Thus far, the fascists have received little or no interest from police in regards to these attacks. The Heritage Front is also testing the resolve of anti-racist forces, again to see what the response will be from the left. Unfortunately, apart from a few significant solidarity links being made between anti-racist and other

community organizations, the response has similarly been quiet.

The second goal for the fascists is simply practice. We know that the nazis engage in various forms of physical and paramilitary training both in the Toronto area and with contacts in the U.S. This slow escalation is allowing their stormtroopers to put their training into practice in increasingly violent scenarios. This again allows the fascists to test their own capabilities and the commitment of different individuals, while also learning and preparing for what they see as the soon to begin Racial Holy War. As the summer grew closer, the nazis began to dramatically increase the level of violence. As mentioned earlier, in April the Heritage Front announced the formation of an Ottawa chapter. The inaugural event of the Ottawa HF was to be a "Rock for Racism" concert to be held on May 29th featuring Canadian Neo-Nazi bands RaHoWa and Aryan.

Anti-racists in Ottawa quickly began to mobilize against the proposed concert, eventually forming a coalition among various groups. ARA was invited to send a delegation from Toronto, and about 50 anti-fascists made the trip by bus. Despite gathering a crowd of 600 to confront the nazis, the liberalism and collaboration with police on the part of some of the coalition organizers plagued the action from the start (the specifics of which are discussed later). This conflict between liberal and militant elements among the demonstrators eventually led to a situation where many of the people wanting to confront the nazis and close down the concert were abandoned by the demo organizers, resulting in violent attacks on the few local anti-racists left behind at the scene. Skinheads brutally beat several demonstrators, hospitalizing half a dozen. The hundred nazis present then marched on the Canadian Parliament building where leader Droege announced to the "seig heiling" crowd that one day these buildings would be theirs.

The Heritage Front and COTC clearly saw the events of May 29th as a victory which provided a major boost to their morale. They crowed about their victory in Ottawa over their hotline for days and there was a marked increase in violent neo-Nazi attacks in Toronto, particularly directed against the Tamil community. The week following Ottawa, a Heritage Front skinhead named Jason Hoolans brutally beat a Tamil man outside a Toronto restaurant, resulting in the man's being hospitalized and partially paralysed. Hoolans was on his way home from a RaHoWa gig in the north of the city when the attack occurred.

### Shut 'Em Down

It was in this context of increasing violence and displays of bravado by the neo-nazis that ARA's next action took place. A demonstration was called for June 11th to march on a neo-Nazi centre of operations. The actual destination of the demo was unknown except to a few ARA organizers. The rationale for the secret destination was a tactical one - if ARA announced the exact destination, the demonstrators would most likely encounter not only a sizeable and armed contingent of skinheads but also an even more sizeable and better armed contingent of police. Rather than tangle with cops on horseback again, ARA chose a different strategy.

Organizers chose as the meeting place a commu-

## REACT TO FASCIST ATTACKS SHUT 'EM DOWN

Over 500 hate crimes are committed every year in Toronto. White supremacists are showing their ugly face - and violent acts by local Nazis are escalating.

For example:

- ARSON: attack and terror campaign on residence for young women
- ASSAULT: Five-on-one physical attack on Black community activist
- HARASSMENT: continued threats to anti-racists

### JUNE 11, 1993 - WE FIGHT BACK.

Assemble at John Innes Community Centre,  
Sherbourne and Queen Sts.  
Friday 7:00 pm sharp  
to march on a Nazi  
centre of operation



## ANTI-RACIST ACTION

P.O. BOX 664, STN. C, TORONTO, ONT. M6J 3S1

co-sponsored by Toronto Anti-Racist Youth Initiative

nity centre only four blocks south of the home of prominent nazi publisher Ernst Zundel. Zundel's home is a well known location in the city and, as one of the main suppliers of hate material internationally, his home/office is of major significance to both fascists and anti-fascists. Because of the location of the meeting place, dozens of police gathered outside Zundel's house (which had been covered in plastic by its owner to protect it from the expected onslaught of eggs and paint bombs.) Fifty or more skinheads were also present to "defend Zundel's house" from anti-fascist attack - an attack which never materialized when, to the surprise and outrage of the cops and nazis, the ARA demonstration piled onto streetcars and headed east to the home of Gary Schipper - the voice of the Heritage Front hateline.

As the phalanx of 300 demonstrators marched up the residential street, ARA marshals passed out information flyers to the participants identifying the still secret site and the reasons for the action. Other ARA people went door-to-door to pass out similar flyers containing Schipper's photo and address to the residents of the largely immigrant neighbourhood and explain to them the intentions of the demonstration.

After reaching the house, with eggs flying through the air, a dozen or more demonstrators expressed their outrage in a more direct fashion by rushing the house and smashing windows. After the direct action was over, and the speeches had been completed, the demonstration withdrew from the neighbourhood. In one instant, the fight had been taken right to the nazis' door in a way that had not occurred anywhere else in Canada. The implications for the fascists were clear - we knew who they were, we knew their faces, we knew where they lived and where they met, and we would not be intimidated by their violence.

A controlled expression of community anger had been accomplished, one which made that anger and resolve clear in a direct and militant fashion, yet one so controlled and disciplined on the part of demonstrators that no other residents' property was damaged. No parked cars were touched, no other homes were touched, no gardens were trampled - only one building was the target, and that target was identified and dealt with.





demo itself and the resulting nazi tactical mistake made in response - namely attempting the mass assault against ARA people later that evening. The assault attempt failed miserably on two levels: 1) the fascists were humiliated in their attempt to boost morale and look tough after being fooled by a classic "bait and switch" and 2) it resulted in the arrests of two key Front leaders. The main effects of the day's events was to force the nazis to turn their organizing inward rather than towards expansion. Planned summer recruiting drives were put on hold due to the legal restrictions placed on some of their key activists following their arrests. Funding for a planned national summer tour by RaHoWa and the opening of a public office space was eaten up by bail costs and lawyer fees.

Despite the critiques of some about June 11th action, this single event and its aftermath was responsible for the significant decrease in fascist activity and violence during the past four months.

## Policing The Crisis?

As always, the role of the police and the intervention of state agencies within a political struggle is multifaceted and often difficult to negotiate both internally and externally in the broader movement. This is no less true in anti-fascist organizing in Toronto. An analysis of the police approach to the movements, both racist and anti-racist, is essential to begin to develop effective strategies.

While the problem of police interference in political organizing is not a new one, it must be understood that the police play a particular dynamic within the context of anti-fascist work which is quite different than in other struggles. This is because in other progressive or radical movements, the question of involving the police as a potential "ally" within the struggle is non-existent. Whether it is organizing around such issues of institutionalized racism, sexism, and homophobia or domestic and foreign policies of the Canadian government, it is clearly recognized that the police as an institution play no potential positive role in advancing the cause.

This is unfortunately not the case with anti-fascist organizing. The activities of neo-nazi groups are by definition violent, whether through actual physical attacks or by the implied threat which their presence presents to those communities which have historically been targets of fascism. Their organizing also involves illegal activities, from relatively minor incidents of vandalism to more serious acts of violence including assault, arson, paramilitary training and murder. Because of this reality, many anti-racists see the police as an option against neo-nazis.

This double vision with regards to the police is both problematic and dangerous. While most are quick to recognize police violence and direct hostility, as was demonstrated during the demonstration on January 25th (with the exception elements of the "legitimate" and conservative anti-racist movement), there remains a strong trend which looks towards legal "remedies" for white supremacy. This trend takes the form not only of desires for stronger laws against hate group activities, but in particular looking towards police for protection.

The willingness to look to police as a strategy usually falls along clear lines of race and class. Certainly those individuals and communities who have not traditionally suffered at the hands of police are more likely to view them as "protectors" rather than oppressors. Therefore it has usually been the anti-racist groups representing these privileged interests which have been urging residents to call police when they encounter racist activity in their community. One Ontario government anti-racism organization has even gone so far as to publish a pamphlet which argues the "call police" strategy while printing on the cover a photo of ARA's January 25th demonstration (without permission, I might add) where mounted police attacked anti-racists to protect neo-nazis.

However, one need only look at the police's atti-

tudes and actions to date to see quite clearly that they are much more interested in attacking and criminalizing anti-racists than they are neo-nazis. While the mounted police attack against ARA and police assault of AIM members on January 25th is the most blatant example of this, we can go further in revealing the clear pattern of police indifference to fascist attacks.

The most obvious aspect of the police approach is the clear double-standard used in investigating nazis and anti-racists. The police have demonstrated time and time again their desire to shelter Wolfgang Droege and the Heritage Front as an organization from the supposedly "random" and "unconnected" acts of their supporters. In the two most violent incidents to date, the 1992 bombing of the Toronto Morgentaler abortion clinic and the 1993 firebombing of Youthlink, the police have allowed Droege's denials of GHF involvement to stand at face value.

In the Morgentaler case, neo-nazi graffiti stating "Peace, Love & White Power" along with the Heritage Front's telephone number was painted on a large wall directly across the street from the bombed clinic. The graffiti was done sometime between 1:00am and 4:00am (the approximate time of the blast) on the night of the bombing. The connection to most would seem quite clear. However, the media revealed that police investigators interviewed Droege and essentially accepted his claim that the Heritage Front was not involved.

Over a year later, police have still not made any arrests despite admitting in the press that the perpetrators were videotaped by the clinic's security system. Certainly the history of state and police attacks against the left reveals that a similar set of circumstances involving a right-wing or government target would have resulted in mass repression. In that case, it seems that if Droege were a leftist he would have been answering questions from a jail cell, assumed guilty until proven innocent. In a similar manner, Droege was allowed to shrug off any involvement or responsibility for the arson attack at Youthlink. While admitting to a Toronto magazine that the Heritage Front did wage a homophobic campaign against the shelter on their hotline, he says that his group had no hand in nor responsibility for the attack. Again this claim to be "uninvolved" has apparently been accepted by the police, who are choosing to ignore a months long, sophisticated and coordinated campaign of harassment and surveillance of the shelter and its employees. This clearly was not the work of a "lone nut", and the police's apparent readiness to accept it as such is yet another demonstration of their unwillingness to go after the fascists as organizations but instead to individualize attacks which are clearly coordinated. Police have even refused to fully investigate the assaulting of a Youthlink staffer by skinheads, choosing instead to charge the woman herself for filing a false complaint!

In each case, "investigators" seem unwilling or uninterested in uncovering connections and links to the Heritage Front or other organizations, but prefer to operate on the basis that the perpetrator is acted in isolation. Yet, at the same time as they shrug off interest in the hierarchy and organizational structure of the Right, the police seem quite interested in identifying such areas in the anti-racist movement.

In fact, instead of being committed to prosecuting neo-nazis, it has been the pattern to date that the police have a much greater interest in investigating ARA. The placement (and later expulsion) of a known agent provocateur early in the organization's life was one indication of state intentions towards the group (a provocateur who now spends his time spreading accusations of homophobia and queer-bashing against ARA in an attempt to drive wedges between the group and the lesbian and gay

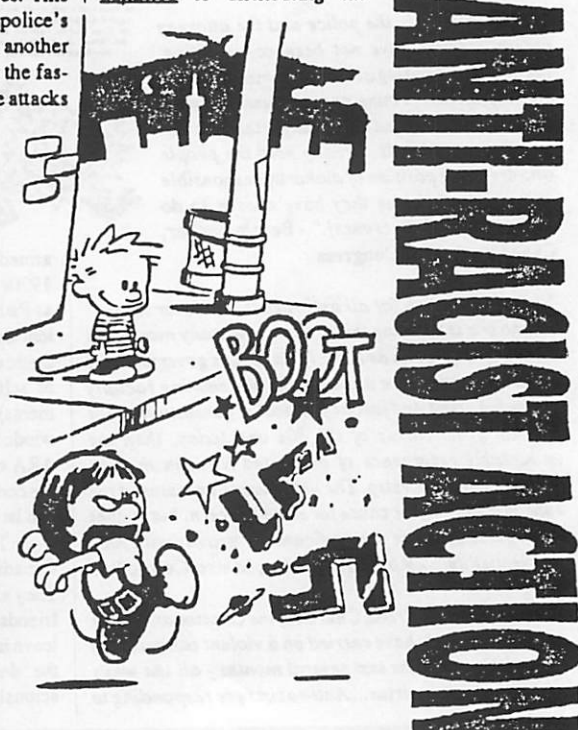
community, a community from which ARA has drawn some of its strongest participation and support). Subsequent events involving the actual prosecution of a high profile Heritage Front spokesperson have been even more revealing. This case has demonstrated concretely that any move by anti-racists to lay charges or make reports to police merely opens the door for police intelligence gathering on the organization and its membership.

Elisse Hategan (aka Deschner) was to face trial in June 1993 on charges of inflammatory libel against a local anti-racist and distributing hate literature. [Editorial Note: Since the writing of this article Hategan's trial date had been moved to 93/11/24. At this time it was revealed that she had defected from the HF. She is now passing information about HF activities and attacks to anti-racist groups and police.] She was being accused of distributing the earlier mentioned racist flyer intended to paint an anti-racist activist as a nazi. Interestingly, the police "investigation" of Hategan, as evidenced through their interviews of other anti-racists called as witnesses in the case, consisted primarily of police attempts to obtain the names of other anti-racist activists and trace structures and chains of communication within the movement.

The case itself provides an ideal cover for such a ruse, for it gives the police authority to subpoena anti-racists and interview them about their work while hiding such probing behind the facade of "prosecuting hate crimes". In fact, it is the suspicion of many that the recent creation of the much publicized "Hate Crimes Unit" within the Metro Police is in itself nothing more than a cover to gather intelligence on the anti-racist movement.

Hategan has been allowed to associate with known members of the Heritage Front in direct contravention of her bail conditions. In fact, in one incident she appeared at an ARA demonstration in a car with known leaders of the Heritage Front and COTC. This situation was immediately noticed by Rodney Bobiwash of the Native Centre. Knowing that the violation should immediately result in her re-arrest and revocation of bail, he notified the officer commanding the police presence at the demonstration, who replied "I don't care." This incident speaks volumes to the reluctance of the police to truly prosecute neo-nazis and to the illegitimacy of the police investigation against Hategan.

The interviewing and subpoenaing of activists continues despite that fact that Hategan has apparently admitted to distributing the



flyer and will presumably pursue a defence based on freedom of speech. It is also significant that by calling anti-racists as witnesses, and thereby revealing their identities to the court and to the nazis, the police are knowingly opening up these individuals for harassment. The conjecture is that such a decision is calculated to place these individuals in jeopardy so that the police can 1) gather intelligence on the fascists by using the anti-racists as "bait", and 2) hope that individuals will turn to the police for protection, thereby creating an opportunity for further intelligence gathering on the anti-racist movement.

These suspicions were reinforced during the pre-trial hearing in October when Hategan's attorney cross examined one of the anti-racist witnesses. Lawyer Harry Doan (who is defending most of the nazis facing charges in the city) spent most of his time asking questions about ARA's organizing - the names of activists, the names of the organizers of the January 25th and June 11th demonstrations, etc. While obviously unrelated to the charges against Hategan, the Crown prosecutor did not object to this line of questioning. The witness was unable to provide Doan with the information he wanted.

Unfortunately, the unwillingness of some to see use of the police as being at best a tactical decision in certain situations rather than a parental-type figure to protect us from bullies is problematic and dangerous. Indeed, people who will go to the police out of trust and reformist beliefs in the system are dangerous for any radical organization which constitutes itself in opposition to that very system. These are often the people who will, perhaps unwittingly, do the job of the police by speaking openly about membership and strategies in some misguided sense that the police, while problematic on some levels, are allies against the nazis. The evidence to date shows us exactly the opposite.

## When Opportunism Knocks

Because of the early successes of ARA, the organization inevitably sparked the interest of various Trotskyist and Marxist-Leninist political parties who began to flock to ARA like moths to a bright light. Unfortunately, it soon became obvious that most were involved not to work honestly against the neo-nazi presence in Toronto but instead to forward the goals of their own organizations.

As has been the experience of many groups who have tried to do political work around various issues, the presence of these party organizations soon becomes an obstacle to building the organization as a whole. The International Socialists (I.S.) in particular played a prominent role in opposing every demonstration (except one) that was ever undertaken by ARA against the far right, while at the same time trying to push through their own proposals which better suited the ends of their party. This behaviour was later discovered to be in keeping with their own political mandate to provide "revolutionary leadership" to organizations of "movementists", who while presumably understanding their own issue, did not have the same vision and understanding of the party on how to defeat the state.

Eventually, after several months of attempting to work in good faith, the International Socialists were voted out of ARA by a 2/3 majority of ARA members. This had the result of causing all the other Trotskyist and Marxist-Leninist parties to leave the group en masse in support of the I.S. While this on the whole was positive in that it saved ARA the similarly obstructionist and opportunist behaviour of the other groups, such as the Trotskyist League and the Bolshevik Tendency, it also caused the loss of a few individual comrades who had risen above their party's dogma to do principled and solid work within ARA.

I.S. attempts to denounce ARA did not cease after their expulsion, but continue in various forms. During the Ottawa demonstration in May, it was the I.S. contingent who actively collaborated with the police against militant

demonstrators. I.S. marshals tipped off the cops to an attempt by ARA and other anti-racists to rush past police lines to get closer to the building where the nazi concert was being held. This tip off resulted in many of those demonstrators on the front lines being hit with pepper spray by police.

Later the I.S. marshals purposefully split the demonstration by declaring "victory" because the cops told them that the concert was going to be shut down. This declaration over the megaphones, coupled with the herding of the participants by I.S. marshals, caused more than half of the demonstrators to leave the site. Many anti-racists refused to acknowledge that any such victory existed when the sounds of the nazi bands playing could clearly be heard even outside the building. This cowardly decision to split the demonstration (and the fact that the ARA contingent of 50 who had stayed behind at the site were forced to leave at 11:00pm to catch the bus back to Toronto) left the few dedicated Ottawa activists vulnerable to the brutal skinhead attack which followed.

Before the June 11th demonstration, the I.S. had made plans to cause a disturbance at the gathering site by demanding that ARA organizers reveal the secret destination of the demonstration (this despite the fact that all the advertising for the action made it clear that, while the demonstration would be going to a neo-nazi centre of operations, the actual destination would not be known until the group arrived there). After the demonstration, in a move reminiscent of COINTELPRO-style tactics, the I.S. took part in drafting a letter condemning ARA for the "violence" of the June 11th action - a letter to which they signed the names of several organizations who, upon being contacted by ARA, had never heard of such a letter and who did not support the statements within it.

Unfortunately, it was not only groups within ARA who have demonstrated similar opportunist and patronizing attitudes towards the organization. While some in the broader left see the formation and effectiveness of ARA as a positive development, at the same time they dismiss the relevancy of anti-fascist work and maintain that ARA should be focusing on "more important" issues, which themselves vary depending upon the personal political priorities of the person being critical.

This attitude was also the basis for much of the internal problems with the International Socialists and others, who saw broader organizing against the police and the racist policies of the state as being the priority. It is unfortunate that in this way some of the most damaging attacks against the nascent anti-fascist movement have come not from the traditional enemies in the state and on the Right, but from the left itself - many more concerned with maintaining a level of "revolutionary chic" rather than doing the work necessary to forge grassroots political movements.

It is the position of many radicals that anti-fascist work is in itself irrelevant because of the relative lack of power and numbers which the neo-nazi movement commands in Canada at this time. These comrades see state and police racism as the arenas where opposition should be directed, and that "chasing nazis" is an exercise in irrelevancy. However well intended, and correct as far as its analysis of institutionalized racism, this perspective is at its base short-sighted and self-defeating.

It is argued that without the sea of mainstream racism in which to swim, that fascists and fascist movements cannot survive. Therefore, the conclusion becomes that doing work against neo-nazis is beginning at the wrong end of the problem. Again, this is a compelling argument in isolation, particularly because it is theoretically accurate. However, theoretical accuracy does not always lend itself to practical and effective political action. As was stated by Italian anti-fascist Errico Malatesta in early part of the century, "The optimum is the enemy of the good" - the never-ending search for the perfect political action all too often serves as an excuse for doing nothing at all. Indeed, if the anti-racist move-

ment in Toronto cannot strategize and mobilize effectively enough to eliminate a couple of hundred nazis, how can we realistically expect to be able to defeat racist immigration laws and police violence and other institutional monoliths?

Unfortunately, much of this criticism fails to learn from history, even recent history. As was pointed out by a Sri Lankan comrade who spent a year in Germany as a refugee in the late 1980s, the German left chose to ignore the neo-nazi movement at a moment when it was relatively small. At a time when 100,000 people would come out to a disarmament demonstration, little or no attention was being given to the "insignificant" fascist problem. Five years later, we see the terrifying results of allowing that movement to grow unopposed. Events such as Rostock, murderous and violent attacks on refugees and guest workers, and the assassination of anti-fascists are not spontaneous, but are the culmination of years of unhindered organizing. Unfortunately much of the left in Canada has chosen to ignore this lesson.

While we can take all the time we want to formulate the perfect political line and theorize the precise political moment to act, in the meantime what work has been done towards building the movements that will presumably act at that moment? Political process, political experience, and resolve to struggle come only through work, and unfortunately discussion is no substitute for action. How do we expect to inspire people after more than a decade of stunning and crushing defeats for progressive and revolutionary movements around the world?

It has to be understood that broad-based and effective political movements do not appear spontaneously, but are the result of years of struggle. This work, if it is to be realistic and successful, must begin by setting upon manageable goals and taking small victories where they can be won. It is out of the crucible of small victories - which provide experience and inspiration to a movement - that larger victories are possible.

## Race And Resistance

An underlying basis for much of the criticism is the fact that ARA, with notable exceptions, is comprised primarily by white, working class youth. Criticism comes from both radicals of colour, who are sceptical of white radical organizations, and from other white radicals, who essentially believe that white people have no place initiating anti-racist work.

Both criticisms are a concern if we truly hope to forge working links against racism in society. The first criticism is certainly legitimate given the history of much of the white left in North America and Europe with replicating systems of racism and class privilege within their organizing. Indeed these problems were a significant contributor to the downfall of radical white movements in the 1960s and 1970s.

These concerns cannot be ignored, yet can be overcome through consistent and principled work, an openness to constructive criticism from people of colour, and willingness to create political alliances not based on an ill-considered integrationist approach. Ultimately this scepticism, if accepted as being legitimate and worked on in good faith, can provide the basis for a politically stronger and mutually respectful relationship, and therefore the foundations for an effective broad-based movement.

It will be the links with radicals of colour, built upon respect gained from a history of principled political work, which can prove to be the strongest and therefore most reliable in a crisis. It has been the demand of some Trotskyist/Marxist-Leninist parties involved with ARA that the organization go out and recruit people of colour to lead the organization. However, this appeal to recruitment and "building a party" is in itself both self-serving and opportunistic. The way to attract more people of colour to the organization, which is indeed a critical and significant goal, must be accomplished through prin-



ciplined political work and an honesty about motivation. People who come into any political organization must be there because they see opportunity, promise, and the possibilities of doing effective work in that organization.

Indeed, merely recruiting people of colour into an organization is a eurocentric, tokenistic approach which ultimately replicates systems of racism in the broader society. Recruitment not only contains an implied hierarchy but also a passivity on the part of those being recruited, which often results in the involvement of people who will be amenable to the party platform, rather than those who want to come in and challenge it for the better. It seems that the latter is always preferable if an organization in sincere about building itself politically and personally. A predominantly white anti-racist group must always be willing to challenge itself on its own racism, and a recruitment based party politic is not an effective means of doing that.

The second criticism is a concern only as much as it is centred in what is essentially a guilt-based politic. For white people to simply defer to people of colour to initiate action around issues of racism is to fundamentally deny both individual and collective historical responsibility for oppression. The effective way to take responsibility for racism is not to sit around and feel guilty and do nothing, but to work against racism in the white community. As former Black Panther Party leader Dhoruba Bin Wahad stated in a lecture in Toronto, "Racism is not a problem Black people have. It's a problem that white people have."

In fact, this is why the make-up of ARA should be seen as an advantage rather than a detriment. While older white leftists may not see the relevancy of white youth, the fascists certainly do and have made the high schools a major political battle ground. The fact that youth of all races are alienated and ignored by society is well accepted, yet until recently it was only the nazis who were capitalizing on this disenchantment to recruit among young white people. Many white radicals have chosen to ignore some of the most important lessons on the role of white people in anti-racist work as articulated by some of the most militant and articulate Black leaders, such as Assata Shakur and Angela Davis.

Such a role was articulated by Kwame Ture and Charles V. Hamilton in their book Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America:

"One of the most disturbing things about almost all white supporters has been that they are reluctant to go into their own communities - which is where racism exists - and work to get rid of it... It is hoped that eventually there will be a coalition of poor Blacks and poor whites... creating a poor-white power block dedicated to the goals of a free, open society - not one based on racism and subordination... The main responsibility of this task falls upon whites... Poor white people are becoming more hostile - not less - toward Black people, partly because they see the nation's attention focused on Black poverty and fear, if any, people coming to them... Only whites can mobilize and organize those communities along the lines necessary and possible for effective alliances with Black communities... If the job is to be done, there must be new forms created. Thus, the political modernization process must involve the white community as well as the Black."

The fact that intelligent, articulate and radical young people are working against the recruitment in their schools, and using the nazi presence as an opportunity to get their peers involved and politically educated around broader issues of racism and oppression should be supported rather than criticised. That fact that many bring with them a distrust and disenchantment with "traditional" forms of protest and modes of political organizing is also instructional to those willing to listen and learn. Unfortunately the distrust of Leninist party organizing, disdain for meaningless picketlines in front of faceless

buildings, and desire to incorporate cultural elements of resistance into political work are all challenges to the current leftist hierarchies in the city, and many choose to dismiss ARA based upon the threat which such a perspective poses to their own relative positions of authority. Far too many leftists see young people as cannon fodder, or sheep to be herded in particular directions, rather than as equal partners in political struggle who bring much needed critique, analysis and enthusiasm to the work.

In their argument against doing anti-nazi work, these critics also misunderstand some of the most basic principles of political organizing. It must be recognized that people are not effectively organized out of guilt but out of recognition of their own interest in change. Again to quote Ture and Hamilton, we must move beyond the false "assumption that political coalitions can be sustained on a moral, friendly, sentimental basis; by appeals to conscience." Such an approach does nothing to expose and identify structures of privilege, and can all too easily lead to political dissolution. To Ture and Hamilton, viable political coalitions stem from "the recognition of the parties involved of their respective self-interests...[and]...the mutual belief that each party stands



to benefit in terms of that self-interest from allying with the other or others."

Young white people are at this time facing recruitment by nazi groups, dealing with nazi gangs in their schools and socializing places, and seeing their friends, white and non-white, being attacked by skinheads. Therefore, anti-nazi organizing speaks directly to their experiences and political needs. Obviously, political education and activism cannot stop with concern over one's own needs, but it has to start there. The birth of ARA provides the opportunity to involve a new generation of activists in anti-racist work and in radical political organizing. It provides the political support for white working class youth to organize themselves around issues of racism and oppression, which presents the opportunity of radicalizing a generation of activists. This is the promise of groups such as ARA, and the long term vision which many of its critics on the left are unwilling to see.

## Moving The Movement

The terrain for developing action against the far right is a constantly changing one. The constraints at this point in time are wholly different than they were in the fall of 1992, and the movement must take this into account if it is to continue to grow and be successful. Actions which were possible during the initial phase of ARA activity are more difficult or impossible to organize successfully today. This is primarily the result of preparedness on the part of the fascists. We have to remember that before the Roma demo, the nazis had not experienced a street level response of any magnitude or intensity. This led them to a feeling of security in regards to their activity vis a vis general meetings. While expecting some degree of infiltration perhaps, they were not ready for a militant pres-

ence of several hundred to converge on their meeting place.

It was the very fact that they were not expecting nor prepared for such a response that in many ways made a successful demonstration possible. The Heritage Front at that time was less secure with information regarding time and place for their meetings, allowing the date and time of the meeting to be disseminated several days before the meeting and the location to be given to their members as much as twenty-four hours beforehand. This time frame allowed ARA to receive the information in enough time to distribute posters and organize demonstrations.

Subsequent to the Roma demonstration, the Heritage Front has kept meeting details secret until as little as a few hours before the meeting, then notifying their supporters via telephone. With this new security practice, the HF has significantly curtailed the ability of anti-racists to mobilize in sufficient numbers to again confront them at their meetings. This fact highlights two specific needs for ARA's continued viability, 1) differentiation of tactics, and 2) the need for better intelligence.

ARA needs to again be creative in its approach to mobilizing against the fascists. To maintain an approach based solely around mass demonstrations is obviously destructive at a moment when the nazis, through their own security measures, have effectively shut off much of that opportunity. One of the advantages which ARA has always had contributing to the militancy and excitement around their demonstrations is the existence of a visible and identifiable enemy. The best ARA actions to date have come when anti-racists were actually facing down nazis in the streets. However, if the fascists can effectively conceal their gatherings, then the opportunity to go face-to-face with them is gone. The element of surprise, of agency, goes from the anti-racists to the racists, who will be the ones determining when and where they will gather publicly and will therefore be expecting confrontation (as well as police protection).

If the chance of going head-to-head is diminished if not lost, then an over-emphasis on mass mobilization will force ARA back onto the path of demonstrating in front of faceless targets, exactly the thing to which the organization worked to develop alternatives. Necessity, then, demands creativity, and the need to devise strategies for both gathering better intelligence and staging effective actions using smaller numbers.

The most important work to be done, however, lies not within the right but within the left. Unfortunately, it is the left at this moment which poses the major obstacle to the growth of an effective anti-racist movement. The institutionalization of progressive Canadian politics and the visible disdain for the work of ARA and other anti-fascist organizations needs to be addressed openly. The left has to begin to move from its current position of attempting to organize along ideological lines, and instead return to a grassroots approach which speaks directly to people's experiences.

We are unfortunately at a political moment when the only people doing real grassroots organizing, particularly in the white community, are the fascists. They are the ones in the trenches, in the schools and workplaces, and they are capitalizing on institutional white supremacy to organize a growing, well-funded, internationally coordinated, and violent racist movement.

While defeating the neo-nazi movement in Canada is a relatively small task in comparison to defeating institutionalized white supremacy, it is one which is crucial to address at this moment. The work of ARA in particular provides a basis from which many bigger things can emerge. The opportunity to involve young people in political organizing, particularly in a struggle which can show concrete short term gains and can and will inevitably be successful, can provide the inspiration and experience necessary to wage broader and longer term struggles.

FROM  
RACE TRAITOR  
#1 WINTER 1993

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## Editorial: Abolish the white race - by any means necessary

1993

The white race is a historically constructed social formation - *historically* constructed because (like royalty) it is a product of some people's responses to historical circumstances; a *social* formation because it is a fact of society corresponding to no classification recognized by natural science.

The white race cuts across ethnic and class lines. It is not coextensive with that portion of the population of European descent, since many of those classified as "colored" can trace some of their ancestry to Europe, while African, Asian, or American Indian blood flows through the veins of many considered white. Nor does membership in the white race imply wealth, since there are plenty of poor whites, as well as some people of wealth and comfort who are not white.

The white race consists of those who partake of the privileges of the white skin in this society. Its most wretched members share, in certain respects, a status higher than that of the most exalted persons excluded from it, in return for which they give their support to the system that degrades them.

The key to solving the social problems of our age is to abolish the white race. Until that task is accomplished, there can be no universal reform, and even partial reform will prove elusive, because white influence permeates every issue in U.S. society, whether domestic or foreign.

Advocating the abolition of the white race is distinct from what is called "anti-racism." The term "racism" has come to be applied to a variety of attitudes, some of which are mutually incompatible, and has been devalued to mean little more than a tendency to dislike some people for the color of their skin. Moreover, anti-racism admits the natural existence of "races" even while opposing social distinctions among them. The abolitionists maintain, on the contrary, that people were not favored socially because they were white; rather they were

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defined as "white" because they were favored. Race itself is a product of social discrimination; so long as the white race exists, all movements against racism are doomed to fail.

The existence of the white race depends on the willingness of those assigned to it to place their racial interests above class, gender or any other interests they hold. The defection of enough of its members to make it unreliable as a determinant of behavior will set off tremors that will lead to its collapse.

*Race Traitor* aims to serve as an intellectual center for those seeking to abolish the white race. It will encourage dissent from the conformity that maintains it and popularize examples of defection from its ranks, analyze the forces that hold it together and those which promise to tear it apart. Part of its task will be to promote debate among abolitionists. When possible, it will support practical measures, guided by the principle, *Treason to whiteness is loyalty to humanity*.

### Dissolve the club

The white race is a club, which enrolls certain people at birth, without their consent, and brings them up according to its rules. For the most part the members go through life accepting the benefits of membership, without thinking about the costs. When individuals question the rules, the officers are quick to remind them of all they owe to the club, and warn them of the dangers they will face if they leave it.

*Race Traitor* aims to dissolve the club, to break it apart, to explode it. Some people who sympathize with our aim have asked us how we intend to win over the majority of so-called whites to anti-racism. Others, usually less friendly, have asked if we plan to exterminate physically millions, perhaps hundreds of millions of people. Neither of these plans is what we have in mind. The weak point of the club is its need for unanimity. Just as the South, on launching the Civil War, declared that it needed its entire territory and would have it, the white race must have the support of all those it has designated as its constituency, or it ceases to

exist.

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Elsewhere in this number, readers will find an account of John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry and some of the events it set in motion. Before the Civil War, the leading spokesmen for the slaveholders acknowledged that the majority of white northerners, swayed above all by the presence of the fugitive slave, considered slavery unjust. The Southerners also understood that the opposition was ineffective; however much the white people of the north disapproved of the slave system, the majority went along with it rather than risk the ordinary comforts of their lives, meager as they were in many cases.

When John Brown attacked Harpers Ferry, Southern pro-slavery leaders reacted with fury: they imposed a boycott on northern manufactures, demanded new concessions from the government in Washington, and began to prepare for war. When they sought to portray John Brown as a representative of northern opinion, Southern leaders were wrong; he represented only a small and isolated minority. But they were also right, for he expressed the hopes that still persisted, dimly perceived, in the northern population despite decades of cringing before the slaveholders. Virginia did not fear John Brown and his small band of followers, but his soul that would go marching on, though his body lay a-mould'rin' in the grave.

When the South, in retaliation for Harpers Ferry, sought further to bully northern opinion, it did so not out of paranoia but out of the realistic assessment that only a renewal of the national pro-slavery vows could save a system whose proud facade concealed a fragile foundation. By the arrogance of their demands, the Southern leaders compelled the people of the north to resist. Not ideas but events were in command. Each step led inexorably to the next: Southern land-greed, Lincoln's victory, secession, war, blacks as laborers, soldiers, citizens, voters. And so the war that began with not one person in a hundred foreseeing the end of slavery was transformed within two years into an anti-slavery war.

It is our faith - and with those who do not share it we shall not argue - that the majority of so-called whites in this



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country are neither deeply nor consciously committed to white supremacy; like most human beings in most times and places, they would do the right thing if it were convenient. As did their counterparts before the Civil War, most go along with a system that disturbs them, because the consequences of challenging it are terrifying. They close their eyes to what is happening around them, because it is easier not to know.

At rare moments their nervous peace is shattered, their certainty is shaken, and they are compelled to question the common sense by which they normally live. One such moment was in the days immediately following the Rodney King verdict, when a majority of white Americans were willing to admit to polltakers that black people had good reasons to rebel, and some joined them. Ordinarily the moments are brief, as the guns and reform programs (both of which are aimed at whites as well as blacks - the guns as a warning and the reform programs as a salve to their consciences) are moved up to restore order and, more important, the confidence that matters are in good hands and they can go back to sleep.

Recently, one of our editors, unfamiliar with New York City traffic laws, made an illegal right turn there on a red light. He was stopped by two cops in a patrol car. After examining his licence, they released him with a courteous admonition. Had he been black, they probably would have ticketed him, and might even have taken him down to the station. A lot of history was embodied in that small exchange: the cops treated the miscreant leniently at least in part because they assumed, looking at him, that he was white and therefore loyal. Their courtesy was a habit meant both to reward good conduct and induce future cooperation.

Had the driver cursed them, or displayed a bumper sticker that said, "Avenge Rodney King," the cops might have reacted differently. We admit that neither gesture on the part of a single individual would in all likelihood be of much consequence. But if enough of those who looked white broke the rules of the club to make the cops doubt their ability to recognize a white person merely by looking at him or her,

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how would it affect the cops' behavior? And if the police, the courts, and the authorities in general were to start spreading around indiscriminately the treatment they normally reserve for people of color, how would the rest of the so-called whites react?

How many dissident so-called whites would it take to unsettle the nerves of the white executive board? It is impossible to know. One John Brown - against a background of slave resistance - was enough for Virginia. Yet it was not the abolitionists, not even the transcendent John Brown, who brought about the mass shifts in consciousness of the Civil War period. At most, their heroic deeds were part of a chain of events that involved mutual actions and reactions on a scale beyond anything they could have anticipated - until a war that began with both sides fighting for slavery (the South to take it out of the Union, the north to keep it in) ended with a great army marching through the land singing, "As He died to make men holy, let us fight to make men free."

The moments when the routine assumptions of race break down are the seismic promise that somewhere in the tectonic flow a new fault is building up pressure, a new Harpers Ferry is being prepared. Its nature and timing cannot be predicted, but of its coming we have no doubt. When it comes, it will set off a series of tremors that will lead to the disintegration of the white race. We want to be ready, walking in Jerusalem just like John.

### What kind of journal is this?

*Race Traitor* exists, not to make converts, but to reach out to those who are dissatisfied with the terms of membership in the white club. Its primary intended audience will be those people commonly called whites who, in one way or another, understand whiteness to be a problem that perpetuates injustice and prevents even the well-disposed among them from joining unequivocally in the struggle for human freedom. By engaging these dissidents in a journey of discovery into whiteness and its discontents, we hope to take